No. 28 L

FRANK LESLIE'S

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Inquisitive Clinton; Or, He Wanted to Know All about It.

"THE BATHER CAUGHT SIGHT OF HIM, AND MADE FOR THE SHORE, SHOUTING: 'HI, YOU! DROP THAT!'"

READ OUR NEW STORY, "INQUISITIVE CLINTON," WHICH BEGAN IN OUR LAST NUMBER.

INQUISITIVE CLINTON;

Or, HE WANTED TO KNOW ALL ABOUT IT.

By COMMODORE AH-LOOK,

Author of "KEEP YOUR BOUNDS," "INQUISITIVE BEN," "OUTSIDE AND IN," "THE CHUMS AT HARVARD COLLEGE," "AVENGING THE HERMIT OF JAPAN," ETC.

CHAPTER VI.

CLINT CATCHES A VARMAR.

LIKE most deaf persons, old Kate was very suspicious.

"Hush!" she breathed. "Le'me close the door—that boy may be listening."

Clint withdrew from his post and retreated toward the kitchen.

In his anxiety he forgot a pan of greasy water which he had left for emptying, and backed right on to it, falling heavily among the spilt liquid.

"Hello! hello!" cried the old lady. "What's the matter?"

Just then the cat, scared out of its senses, gave a "mew" from beneath the sink, whither it had darted for shelter.

"It was Tommy," said the boy.

"I don't believe you," she snapped. "Now you jes' wipe up that grease, and get some soap and water an' scrub the floor."

"To-night?" he grumbled.

"Yes, right away!" decisively. "You made the muss, so you may clean it up. Sarves you right for peeking and listening."

She watched him procure the water from the pump and the soap from the tub, then, after seeing him well at work, returned to the parlor and closed the door.

The kitchen was large, and the boards of the floor were worn in hollow places, leaving the pine-knots, like islands, dotted all over its surface.

These were hard to kneel upon, and Clint soon began to grumble, saying:

"I didn't bargain for this. S'pose if I refuse she'll send me about my business."

Presently the clock struck ten.

After he had scoured the worst portion of the boards he gave the remainder a damp wipe, then rose, and once more approaching the door, listened.

Kate and her husband were talking about the will.

"Wish I could find it," mumbled the old man.

"So do I," thought the boy.

"You're sartain it ain't in the clock?" continued her husband.

"Ain't I looked?" was her tart reply. "You can't hide anything in a clock. It was jes like you to guess such a place as that. You put my heart in my mouth when you said, so positively, you knowed where it was."

"Clock!" breathed Clint. "Ah! perhaps she didn't search as I shall. "Clock! Of course, lots of wills have been hidden in clocks."

He retreated to the kitchen, and seating himself in the chimney-corner, proceeded to doze.

Presently the woman entered the room, and seeing him, shouted:

"Hi, you boy! It's time you went to bed. You've got to be up by three o'clock to-morrow."

"Eh?" he wearily replied; "where am I to sleep?"

"In the barn," she said, giving him a rousing shake. "I'll call you, so you'll be in time to fetch the cows from the pasture."

She lighted a candle in a horn lantern, and opening the rear door, bade him follow her.

"Thought I was to sleep in the house?" he growled.

"No," she said; "we've changed our minds, and you will have to lodge in the barn."

"I'm not a tramp," he grumbled.

"You be a listener," she said. "You was pecking at that door to-night."

"Was I?" he innocently demanded. "You don't say?"

"Yes, you was," sourly. "You are a mean boy."

As she spoke she unfastened the padlock on the barn-door, and bade him enter.

"Are you going to lock me in?" he inquired.

"Ye-s," she nodded.

"S'pose the barn gets on fire?" he asked.

"S'pose it don't?" she said. "S'pose you go right in an' hold your tongue! We want a hired boy who works, not talks."

Clint sighed and entered the barn, the door of which was quickly banged to and secured, leaving him in pitchy darkness.

"Hi!" he yelled; "where's my bedclothes?"

"Sleep on the hay," was her answer. "If you are cold, burrow in it."

"This is nice," he muttered, as he groped his way along the floor. "Never mind, I'll earn that thousand dollars for mother."

He soon discovered a warm corner, where he curled down and slept like a top.

Before daybreak he was aroused by Kate, who, prodding him with a stick used in driving cows, shouted:

"Git up. Git up!"

Clint felt weary and sore, but he rose, and giving himself a shake, followed her outside.

The air was damp with fog from the sea, and he could scarcely discern anything a few feet from him.

"Go down to the thirty-acre lot and bring in the cows," said his employer, handing him the stick. "Come, hurry up."

"Where's the lot?" he inquired.

"Follow that road," she said, indicating the left.

"How many cows are there?"

"Nine."

"What colors are they?"

"Two are black and white, five red, one brindled and one white."

"Say," he demanded, as the old lady turned to go indoors, "how much are they worth apiece?"

"You go an' fetch 'em in," she said. "It's none of your business how much they are worth."

Instead of resenting this he stopped back to her side and inquired:

"Say, do they belong to you and your husband?"

"Con-found you, go an' fetch 'em in," she cried. "You ask more questions than them lawyers. Where be you from?"

"Poquam," he said.

By that time it was light enough to see the road, so he nodded to her and started.

"Poquam!" she ejaculated, as he vanished from her sight. "My opinion is that boy is another detective. If he is I'll make it warm for him."

Clint sauntered down the lane, and after walking a mile, arrived at a gate at which he found several cows, evidently waiting for some one to release them.

"Yes," he said to himself, "there are two black and white, five red, one brindled and a white one." Then, raising his voice, he cried: "Woa, bossy!"

The animals drew back and permitted him to remove the bars, which they passed through, and walked leisurely homeward, leading as they went.

As Clint followed them he murmured:

"I wonder how I can get at that clock? Of course the will is in it. Wish she hadn't caught me listening."

He raised his eyes as he spoke, and saw a man on his left dodging behind some bushes.

"Ah-ha!" chuckled the boy. "You're up to something wrong, I know. Going to steal our cows, I shouldn't wonder."

The stranger moved to the next bush, and there crouched down out of the lad's sight.

Clint forgot all about his charges, which were quietly browsing on the rank herbage of the roadside. His inquisitiveness was excited, and he was bound to know what the man was after.

The country toward the shore was sandy and hilly, the ground being dotted with clumps of beach, pine, and other bushes, and covered with a thick growth of reedy beach grass.

At every few yards along the road were boards bearing this notice:

KEEP OFF THIS LAND.

TRESPASSERS WILL BE PROSECUTED.

SAMMIS BROWN.

Clint crawled through the fence, knelt behind a stunted pine-tree, and awaited developments.

Presently the man, a tall, thin, stoop-looking individual, rose and glanced anxiously about him, then started for the shore, distant about a quarter of a mile, stopping at every few yards in order to look back.

"Well, well, that puzzles me," muttered Clint. "He ain't after our cows, that's sartin. I'd like to know why he's dodging."

He dropped upon his hands and knees, just as he had read hunters do when trailing animals, and crawled after the tall man.

In some places the ground was covered with running briers, which tore his pants and scratched him terribly, spite of which he kept on.

It's no joke crawling a quarter of a mile, and by the time Clint reached the beach-bank he felt sorry he had undertaken the contract.

Creeping into a clump of gnarly brushwood, he peeked at the man, who was seated on the sand, holding a vial in his hand.

Clint had read lots of sensational stories about persons committing suicide in lonely spots like that.

"Ah," he gasped, "he's going to p'ison hisself. I'll watch him."

Quite imbued with this idea, he could think of nothing else.

There is, to an inquisitive person, a great satisfaction in secretly watching even a tragedy.

Of course a well-trained boy would not have been guilty of such a thing; however, as the reader knows, Clint was not all he should have been.

The thin man removed the cork from the bottle; smelt at the contents, made a grimace, and closing his eyes, placed it to his lips and tilted the stuff down his throat.

As he did so Clint, with ashen features and glaring eyes, rose behind the clump of bushes, crying:

"I saw you!"

"Eh?" angrily demanded the man, advancing with giant strides. "You saw *what*, eh?"

"Saw you—take—take—take that—p'ison!" faltered the boy.

He did not like the expression on the man's face.

"Saw me take what?" snarled the other, nearing him with tremendous rapidity. "So you've been watching me, have you! You're the fellow who reported me last week?"

It's useless to argue with a man when he is mad, so Clint took to his heels.

He was a good runner, and by dint of dodging for a while, kept out of his pursuer's reach.

Presently he felt him gaining, so resolved to stop suddenly and give the man a tumble.

Unfortunately for Clint, his enemy knew that trick as well as he did, and when the lad squatted, made a grab at him, thus falling right on to his victim.

Both rolled over and over on the sand, and remained for some seconds breathlessly regarding one another.

Clint was the first to recover his breath.

"Say," he panted, "ain't you taken p'ison?"

The tall man rose, and regarding him menacingly, demanded:

"Have you been watching me?"

"Now, don't get mad, mister," said the boy. "I suppose you're tired of your life. I've read of such things in the papers."

"What!" cried the man. "That was medicine I took just now."

"Of course," said Clint. "Please let me go. I have to drive the cows to the farm. You have a right to do as you like."

"You've watched me before and had me fined—haven't you?" savagely continued the man.

"Me, sir!" exclaimed the amazed lad. "I never saw you before in my life."

"I know better." angrily retorted the other, giving him a succession of sounding slaps over the ears. "Now you dare watch me again, and you'll catch it worst than that. Clear out, and in future mind your own business."

Clint felt as mad as a hornet.

"You're crazy!" he cried, when he reached a safe position. "Ya! you didn't hurt me, mister."

Notwithstanding his punishment, he was determined to see the end of the matter.

Making a detour of several yards, he crept back to the beach-bank and peeped at "the maniac," as he termed him.

The man was disrobing, preparatory to taking a bath.

He had come down to the cottage near the farm, for the purpose of recuperating his health and enjoying the sea-bathing.

The shore belonged to a man who objected to persons bathing on it, hence the notices.

As he failed to see why he should not enjoy a dip, he had repeatedly disregarded the warning, and been fined for so doing.

Not knowing who had reported him, he believed Clinton was the culprit, hence his treatment of the boy.

"Ah," thought the latter, as the man started for the water, "he's bound to do it. He took p'ison first, and now he's going to drown himself. I'll see to cure his clothes before any one can steal them."

Saying this, he rose and moved toward the spot where the garments were lying.

CHAPTER VII.

AN UNEXPECTED MEETING.

CLINT watched the man as he advanced, expecting to see him plunge into the waves and sink, instead of which he dived, came up again, and swam like a seal.

"Guess I'd swallow six drugs and find out who he is," mused the boy, squatting by the garments. "Perhaps he's changed his mind."

He picked up the coat, and feeling in the pockets, presently produced a letter-holder, marked in gold letters "C. Harrison."

"I want to know," he exclaimed, as with trembling hands he drew forth his own memorandum-book. "Why, this is the letter I'm after—Charley Harrison! He's the murderer of poor Sam Jones!"

As he uttered these words the bather caught sight of him, and made for the shore, shouting:

"Hi! you! Drop that!"

Clinton remembered the hard slaps lately given him, so he obeyed, and rising, made off, thinking:

"I'll not stay now. He might murder me."

Harrison emerged from the sea, yelling "Stop, thief!" at the top of his voice, notwithstanding which the boy ran as hard as he could.

He soon reached the place where he had left his cows, when, to his amazement, he found them gone.

"Guess this old woman has taken them," he thought. "Reckon I'd best find that document, then turn my attention to Mr. Harrison. A man who will box a boy's ears as he did mine would do anything."

He thrust his hands into his pockets and sauntered homeward, whistling as he went, never imagining the man was on his trail, or that, ahead of him, Kate was waiting, armed with a club used in driving stock.

He walked with his glances fixed on the ground, for he was thinking of the missing will.

Presently, at an abrupt turn in the road, he encountered Kate, who, with an old hat of her husband's stuck on her head, looked a comical fury.

Her lips were tightly set, her eyes glared, and she grasped the club menacingly.

"Hullo!" he smilingly inquired. "What's the matter?"

The old woman sniffed vigorously and snapped:

"Where's them knows?"

"How do I know?" he coolly answered.

"If you let 'em get into that swamp," she cried, raising the weapon and pointing to some rush-grown bottom-land in the distance, "I'll warm you."

"Thankee," he quietly returned; "I'm warm enough, marm."

"Don't sass me!" she shrieked. "I won't have our hired boy mean me!"

"I'm not doing it," he said, turning, in order to go in search of the missing animals, and as he did so, beholding the tall man, who was advancing on tiptoe. "Oh, hookey! here's that murderer!"

Kate did not catch his words, however. As he again turned and darted past her, she noticed the tall man, who, quickening his pace, ran after the lad, shouting:

"Stop, thief!"

The chase did not last long, and soon poor Clint was writhing in the man's grasp.

"Hello!" cried Kate, hobbling toward the spot.

"Don't you hurt that boy, mister."

"He tried to rob me!" cried the angry man.

"He tried to commit suicide. He's a murderer," cried Clint. "I didn't rob him. He's a murderer, ma'am."

"What did you say?" indignantly exclaimed the stranger. "I'm a murderer!"

"Yes, you *know* you are!" stoutly answered the boy. "You p'isoned a man named Sam Jones, years ago, and now you want to commit suicide."

"Is that so?" demanded old Kate. "I knew Sam; I thought he went West!"

"Of course he did," said the man. "He used to live at Mrs. Richardson's, here in the Hollow. He was subject to fits, but I cured him."

"You *killed* him!" boldly answered Clint. "Your name is Charlie Harrison, isn't it?"

"It is," was the other's amazed response; adding: "Boy, are you in your senses?"

"Be you Charlie Harrison, who used to work at a drug-store in New York?" said Kate, eying the stranger suspiciously.

"I am," he said. "I can prove myself innocent of the charge brought against me by that loodsey."

"If you are that man, you killed my poor Sam," solemnly observed Kate. "I allus said you and Hannah Richardson committed the crime between you."

"There!" exclaimed Clint; "somebody else knows it besides myself!"

"That Sam Jones was a cat," said the man, with a grin.

"A *what*?" faltered the boy.

"A miserable old cat," said the other, glancing at the woman. "It had fits, and Kate, here, would not hear of its being killed."

"Sartinly I wouldn't. It was murder," she angrily retorted. "You an' Hannah ought to have been punished."

"Oh," said Clint, "it was—a—cat, eh?"

"Yes," nodded Mr. Harrison; "a tortoise cat."

"Why was he called Sam Jones?" asked the boy.

"Sam gave it to my young miss," observed Kate.

"She named it Sam Jones, after him."

"Oh, gasped Clint, "I—I—I've made a mistake."

"How came you to know I poisoned it?" demanded the druggist.

"I read it in a book," faltered the lad. "I thought Sam was a man."

"Was that why you followed me?" inquired Harrison.

"Ye-as," drawled the boy. "I saw you dodging like a tramp, and thought I'd watch you. "You acted kinder crazy, anyhow."

"And you are not the person who informed on me, and had me fined for trespassing on the beach?"

"No, sir," he cried.

"Come," said Kate, "you go and find them knows. Mind, if they're bogged, you'll suffer for it."

She turned upon her heel, and walked homeward, leaving Clinton with the druggist, who, after agreeing to help him discover the animals, said, as they proceeded toward the swamp:

"How came you to learn about my fixing that cat? Did Kate tell you of it?"

"If you'll promise not to go back on me I'll let you know," said the boy.

Harrison gave him the required pledge, after which Clint related the whole story.

The man laughed so that he was obliged to sit down on the roadside.

"Oh," he cried, "this is too comical."

"I don't see anything funny in it," quietly observed Clint. "You've spoiled everything. I intended to have you punished, and now the bottom is knocked out of the entire business."

This made his companion laugh more than ever.

Presently he said:

"Come, let me help you find the cows. I know every inch of the spooky homestead. So my old friend, Hannah Richardson, is your aunt?"

"Yes, sir."

"Then now is it you're working on a farm?"

Clint walked on for a minute or two, then paused and turning to the druggist, whispered:

"I'm here on business!"

"What sort?"

"Ah," style replied the lad, "I must not tell."

"Another murder?" chuckled the man.

"No!" said Clint, flushing at the remembrance of his folly. "You promised not to say anything more about that. Everybody is liable to error!"

"Yes," was the amused response, "though, I must say it served you right for reading your aunt's diary. You would have made a worse muddle of it had you gone farther in the matter."

Clint nodded, thoughtfully, and said:

"S'pose we search for them knows?"

They moved toward the swamp, and presently discovered the animals grazing on the tender rushes.

He was about to yell to them, when his companion remarked:

"Don't holler, my son! If you do they'll scare and plunge into the mire. Once they get bogged it will be all up with them!"

"Right you are, mister!" said the boy.

"Come, bossy! Come, come!" cried the druggist.

The cows listened, and one by one turned and trotted back to the road, whisking their tails as they went.

Mr. Harrison accompanied Clint a short distance; then, halting, remarked:

"I'm down here for the benefit of my health, to enjoy sea-bathing. I live at Deacon Saimein's cottage. Come over and see me!"

"Thank'ee," answered the lad. "Where do you live when you're at home?"

"In Ohio!" was the reply.

Clinton was about to ask a string of questions, when he heard old Kate calling:

"Now, then, you boy, hurry up!"

"Good-morning, mister!" he cried, and away he went, shouting, "I'm coming!"

He found the woman and her husband at the entrance of the milking shed, both man and wife being in anything but pleasant tempers.

"We shan't git the knows milked ready for the six o'clock train," she angrily remarked. "I suppose you think you're an offle smart boy!"

"Well, yes," he drawled. "So most folks say! I'm reckoned to be pretty smart!"

"Can you milk knows?" demanded her husband.

"Ye-s!" he answered. "Guess I kin!"

By that time the animals were in their stalls.

"You take them three, then," continued the old fellow. "Mind, the white one is a kicker!"

"All right!" he cried.

In a short time he was seated on a stool, working away like a little man.

He knew all about milking, and finished long before the old people did, the kicker being too full of food to give him trouble.

After he was through Kate bade him hitch up the team and bring it round to the door of the dairy, to which place she and her husband proceeded to convey the milk for straining.

He harnessed the miserable-looking animals, and securing them to the shaky wagon, drove round to the building, then descended and knocked at the door.

"You keant come in!" cried the old woman.

"Oh," he thought, "guess they're watering the milk. I'd like to know; have read of this sort of thing."

On one side of the dairy was a big puncheon used to collect rain-water.

It was a very ancient-looking affair, but stout and strong, and its mouth was covered with a couple of pieces of board that were not so solid as the vessel.

The puncheon was placed beneath one of the windows, which were seven feet from the ground.

Clint took this all in at a glance, and backing the wagon on to the sward, mounted a wheel, and from thence stepped on to the cover of the vessel.

He could hear Kate say:

"Hurry up; the boy will be late, and it we miss the train, Jenkins and Purse will make trouble."

"Give me the water," mumbled the old man.

"Ah," murmured Clint, "water. I knew it."

Up to that time he had been crouching on the lid of the puncheon; now he grabbed the wooden gutter that projected it with the roof, and slowly rose, until his eyes were on a level with the sill of the window.

Kate was holding a sieve in the mouth of a milk-can, ready to be used to convey the liquid by rail, and her husband was pouring warm water into the contents of one of the pails.

"Ready, pet too much," she whispered.

Clinton's eyes protruded, his mouth opened, and his face turned red, but, grasping the sill with both hands, he stood on tiptoe and peeped in.

"Ah-h!" he thought, "I've caught you!"

At that instant the cover beneath him cracked, broke in, leaving him clinging to the sill like a bat to a rafter, or a monkey to the trunk of a tree.

In the struggle to keep out of the puncheon, he thrust his head into the open window and ejaculated:

"Oh-oh!"

The sudden darkening of the aperture caused Kate to look up, and her companion to drop the bottle of warm water.

Ere Clint could utter another word she stepped on to a bench, and grasping him by both ears, demanded:

"What do you mean by peeping—eh?"

CHAPTER VIII.

KATE BECOMES SUSPICIOUS.

SOME boys, placed in the awkward position of Clint, would have felt ashamed.

As he knew no better, he did not betray any extra emotion, merely remarking:

"I knocked at the door, and as you didn't let me in thought I'd—I'd—tell you I was ready, through this window!" adding: "I won't inform again you, ma'am, for putting warm water in the milk!"

Old Kate felt mad enough to eat him, yet dared not do more than pinch his ears.

"Say, stop that!" he cried.

"So back!" she said, giving him a push that sent him her-bop into the puncheon. "You're a horrid spy—that's what you are!"

As he soused in he gave a shriek, hearing which she poked her head through the window, and, on seeing him up to his chin in the water, said, in a severe tone:

"Sarves you right! Now git out!"

"I can't!" he gasped, for his sudden immersion had almost taken away his breath. "I—I—co-co-can't!"

"Then stay where you are!" she cried. "I knowed you was a detective all along!"

In a few moments the old people came out of the house, carrying a tall tin can, which was carefully looked.

They placed this in the wagon, and Kate, mounting to the seat, drove off to the nearest depot, leaving her husband to help Clint out of the puncheon.

Ketchum was a stupid sort of man, and depended entirely upon his wife.

As the vehicle rambled down the lane he gaped at the boy, who was hanging to the rim of the vessel and shivering violently, and said:

"Land knows how I'm going to help you!"

"T-t-t-there on the top!" suggested Clint.

"What, an' waste all that good rain-water?" quavered the other. "We use it to——"

Here he paused and scratched his chin, reflectively.

"I know!" said the boy. "You c-c-c-use it to p-p-put in the m-m-milk!"

"Oh, we do, do we?" said Ketchum. "I un'erstan'! You've been prying! Well, soon as you're done that, you may stay where you be until Kate comes back!"

"But I shall—ugh—catch a chill!" cried the alarmed lad. "It's c-c-c-cold in here!"

"Kean't help it!" sourly answered the other. "We didn't put you in there! You're spilte our rain-water!"

Away he went, leaving Clinton clinging tightly to the edge of the puncheon in order to keep from drowning.

Half an hour of this seemed a year to the lad, who over and over again wished he had never seen Sandy Hollow.

He dared not let go; the fluid in the puncheon being deep enough to drown him.

"Uncle was right," he moaned. "I'm too inquisitive. A nice mess I'm made of this."

He shouted "Murder!" but no one came to his aid.

"I've read of such things," he thought, as he gathered his strength for a final yell. "Mur-der!"

"Hello, hello!" cried a well-known voice, and on turning his eyes in the direction from whence it came, he beheld Mr. Jarvis, who, on recognizing him, exclaimed:

"What on earth are you doing in there, Clint?"

"I—I fifi-fell in," he shiveringly replied. "T-t-turn on the t-t-tap, will you?"

Jarvis did better than that. He seized a stake and knocked out the big, wooden plug at the bottom of the puncheon.

Out gushed the water, and forth from the house came old Ketchum.

"What do you mean by treating your hired boy like that?" angrily demanded the lawyer.

"We didn't put him in there," loudly responded the man.

"Get a ladder at once, and assist me to help him out," said Jarvis.

By that time Clinton was blue with the cold.

His teeth chattered, and he really felt sick.

When the water was all run off, Jarvis and Ketchum lifted the vessel and released the prisoner.

"Quick!" cried the former. "Which is his bedroom?"

"He sleeps in the barn," muttered the man.

Jarvis carried Clint into the house, and mounting the stairs, entered the old folks' chamber.

"Where keep here," said Ketchum.

"I don't care," decisively answered the other. "Light a fire. Bring me some hot water—lots of it. Fetch a big tub."

"Hello! what's all this?" cried old Kate, entering the apartment.

"I won't have that boy in my room!"

"Woman," sternly observed Jarvis, "I am master here. Do as I tell you and be spry, or you'll have to answer for this poor fellow's life."

Kate scowled and obeyed.

Jarvis soon had Clint in a bath, and when circulation was restored, wrapped him in a blanket and put him to bed.

The boy was conscious, but too much exhausted too speak.

He heard his friend question Kate, and was annoyed by the way in which she represented his actions.

Instead of explaining who Clint was, and telling her not to work him like a slave, Jarvis said:

"I have no objection to his doing everything you want, but I insist upon his sleeping in a good bed, and in your treating him as your equal. He's an orphan, and is under my protection."

"He's a listener!" she snapped.

"Yes," put in the old man; "he is the most inquisitive boy we ever knew."

"I cannot help that," replied Jarvis. "If you treat him properly he will not annoy you. The poor fellow was lonely, and listened because you shut him out of your room."

Clint chuckled when he heard this.

"Is he any relation or yourn?" demanded Kate.

"No," said Jarvis. "I will guarantee that he is honest, and a good worker. If you decline to keep him I shall compel you to quit here."

"Oh, we'll keep him, sir!" smiled the woman. "We don't want to quit here until we find the will."

She cast a suspicious glance at the sick boy, then, signaling to her husband, retired from the apartment.

Clint was anxious to speak; however, Jarvis checked him, saying:

"Go to sleep, my son. Tell me when you have rested."

The bath had made the lad drowsy, and after a while he slumbered. In an hour he awoke, and saw Jarvis sitting by the window, reading.

"Say!" he murmured.

"Well?" observed the lawyer, turning toward him. "How do you find yourself?"

"I'm all right."

"Have you discovered anything?"

"Ye-as," breathed the boy; "I know where it is."

"Where?" whispered Jarvis.

"Wait until they have gone to bed, and I'll show you," said the lad, in a low tone. "It's all right. I'm glad you came down."

"Tell me now," murmured the other.

"No-oo!" softly replied Clint. "I want to be with you when you find it."

"Confound the boy!" thought the lawyer. "He wants to know all about everything."

He was aware it was useless to worry the lad, so began to ask him about his experiences at the farm.

Of course this led up to Clint relating his adventure with Mr. Harrison, the recital of which almost sent Jarvis into convulsions.

"Oh," he cried, "this is immense! I must tell your uncle."

"Please don't," urged Clinton. "Aunt will never forgive me."

"But I must," chuckled the lawyer.

"Very well, then," said the boy; "I won't tell you where that will is."

"All right, then. I'll keep your secret," said Jarvis. "Mind, if you're not accurate, I am at liberty to relate this joke to your uncle."

"All right," nodded the lad. "I'm pretty certain I know."

About four o'clock Clint rose and went downstairs with his friend.

Kate was sour and suspicious, feeling he was a detective in the employ of the lawyer.

"Can I help you, marm?" he asked; "I am all right now."

"Go and saw some wood," she said.

He knew the exercise would do him good, so obeyed.

As he was sawing away, Jarvis strolled toward the shed.

He eyed Clint from under his shaggy brows, and remarked:

"Do you like that sort of work?"

"No," he decisively answered. "Kate thinks I'm a machine, and runs me from three A. M. to eight P. M."

"You've only been here twenty-four hours," chuckled Jarvis. "If you find that will, there are a thousand dollars ready for you," adding: "At what time are we to search for it?"

Clint paused in his occupation and said, in a low tone:

"When the clock strikes one. Guess the old folks will then be fast asleep. I'll tap at your door and call you."

Jarvis knew if he could lay his hands on the document his client would win his suit, so was ready to try anything.

"Keep right on working, my son," he said. "If we only succeed in that will, I'll give you something myself for your mother."

Clinton nodded, and resuming his sawing, never let up until the old woman summoned him to supper.

At the conclusion of the meal she sent him to the stable to groom the horses, and when he returned sullenly invited him into the parlor.

She knew all about the reward for the discovery of the paper, and believed that the boy was there to rob her of it.

The grim old clock in the corner ticked off the minutes and announced the death of each hour.

Six—no one spoke.

Seven—there they sat like Quakers.

Eight—her husband retired.

Nine—she rose, and said:

"Mr. Jarvis, you can, of course, stay just as long as you like, but it's time that hired boy was in bed."

"Where am I to sleep to-night?" asked Clinton.

"I'll show you," she said; "come this way."

Clint winked at the lawyer as he quitted the room, and breathed:

"One. Keep awake."

Jarvis nodded.

Mrs. Ketchum lighted a candle in a tin candlestick, and signaling Clinton to follow her, led the way.

Up one stair across a hall, down a second stair and through a long passage went Kate, as grim as a ghost, presently pausing before the door of a small room containing a single bed, a table, and a chair.

Motioning the boy to enter, she turned abruptly upon him and said:

"So he's your father, is he?"

"Who?" hurriedly inquired the lad.

"Lawyer Jarvis," she tartly replied.

"You're mistaken," he said.

"Then he's your uncle?"

"No, he sin't, neither."

"Your kinsman?"

"That's correct."

She gave him a searching look, and pointing to the bed, remarked:

"You'll find that kinder lumpy, but it's good enough for a spy, any how," sniffing. "Oh, I do hate a peeping poll-pry. I dew, an' that's a fact."

"I sin't a poll-pry!" he indignantly returned.

"I'm——"

Before he could complete his speech she was off with the candle and had locked him in.

"Say!" he shouted; "say—here!"

He heard her footsteps echoing along the passage, then all became still.

"If she thinks I'm going to stand this she's mistaken," he murmured, as he fumbled in his pockets for a match.

Luckily he found three, and on igniting one of them discovered a piece of candle.

"It's a little after nine o'clock now," he said. "I'll sit up. Wonder how I shall know when it is one?"

After watching a long time he heard the clock strike ten.

"Long enough!" he cried. "I'll slip off my shoes and walk the floor until the time comes." Then, remembering he was locked in, added: "But how am I to get out of here?"

CHAPTER IX.

GRANDFATHER'S CLOCK.

CLINT relighted his candle and began to examine the door. He had read about certain bold heroes who could get out of prison at will, and imagined he could do the same.

"Fe-wough!" he murmured. "I can't unlock that."

Raising the light aloft, he noticed a small window over the door.

"Ah, ha!" he cried. "I can get out that way!"

He drew the table forward, and, mounting upon it, began to tug at the sash.

It was nailed into the frame.

"Worse an' worse!" he muttered. "She knows I'm after that will and has locked me into the prison!"

As he spoke he grasped the window and shook it, when, to his delight, it came out, frame and all.

"Eh, this is suthin' like!" he thought. "It's same as what I've read about. Reckon I'll get out of this and wait in the passage."

He wriggled through the aperture and landed, like a cat, outside, after which he paused, in order to listen.

The only sound he heard was the thumping of his own heart.

Presently he moved along the passage, climbed the stair and groped his way into the hall, through which he had passed on his way to bed.

It was a large entry, the same size as the one on the ground floor, and the chambers all opened on to it.

"Ah," he thought, "Kate put me to sleep in the L, away from everybody;" then, pausing, continued: "I wonder which room Mr. Jarvis is in?"

The floor was covered with matting, which prevented his footsteps being heard, so he crept round the place and discovered that all the doors were locked.

"Let me see," he mused. "I was taken into the second chamber on the right, as you come up-stairs —Kate's room!—I won't try that! Now, I wonder which Mr. Jarvis is in?"

He dropped upon his hands and knees and prowled round like a cat, until he heard a gentle snore proceeding from one of the apartments on his left.

"Ah—h!" he chuckled, when he knelt upon some tin tacks and unconsciously gave vent to a cry of pain.

The snoring stopped dead, and he heard the old woman say:

"What's that?"

It was no joke having half a dozen sharp tacks sticking in your flesh; however, he contrived to bear the pain and to pick them out.

After a moment's pause, Kate struck a light and again exclaimed:

"What's that?"

"It was the cat," drowsily replied her husband. "Go to sleep."

"Not until you've got up and searched the room," she snapped. "I believe that boy has a design on our lives."

"Pooh!" growled the old fellow. "You locked him in, didn't you?"

"Yes," she answered, "I locked him in safe enough, but he may get out. He an' Jarvis is working together. Oh, I wish we could find that will!"

"I'm certain it's in the clock," drowsily answered her partner.

Clint had by that time applied his ear to the door, and was listening eagerly.

"Clock! Nonsense!" she said. "The heirs searched and we searched. I tell you it ain't there."

"But it is!" stoutly returned Ketchum. "Didn't I dream of it three times running?"

"Pooh!" she cried. "Your dreams ain't worth shucks. We're all wrong."

"Mr. Biggleswade said 'Look at the clock' just afore he died, didn't he?" stubbornly persisted the other.

"Of course he did!" she snapped. "He wanted to know what time it was. Ever since we remembered that, you've been crazy 'bout the clock."

"It's there," said the man. "I tell you what'll we do to-morrow. We'll take the old thing to pieces."

"Will you?" thought Clint. "I'll be beforehand with you!"

"You won't find nothin'," she sniffed. "My 'pinion is, Mr. Biggleswade burnt that dookkeyment."

"Pooh!" once more ejaculated her husband.

"Don't you pooh at me!" she cried. "I won't have it."

A dead silence ensued, during which Clint remained with open mouth and ears; then Kate suddenly demanded:

"Have you got the gun?"

"Yes," growled Ketchum; "it's in the corner here, handy."

"Is it loaded?" she said.

"Yes," he answered.

Although Clint waited patiently until the clock below struck eleven, he did not hear any further conversation.

"Guess Mr. Jarvis is in the room they used," he thought, as he moved slowly across the hall.

The latch of the door yielded to his touch, and he entered the apartment.

Jarvis was sitting up in the dark, slumbering, a fact revealed when Clint struck a match.

"Two hours more," thought the boy, regarding the lawyer. "He's had a sleep; now, why should not I?"

He aroused him, and when Jarvis came to his senses, said:

"She locked me up!"

"Who?" murmured the other. "What—how?" He was not quite awake.

"Unbutton your eyes and I'll tell you," whispered the boy.

Jarvis rose, shook himself, gaped, yawned, and, remembering where he was, inquired:

"Is it one o'clock?"

Clint explained and said:

"You've had a good sleep; now let me take a turn while you watch."

"I'm tired," said the lawyer. "Can't you tell me where the will is? I can manage those people."

"No, I cannot divulge the secret until the time comes," replied the lad.

He uttered the words "divulge" and "secret" with a mysterious air, just as he had heard a man speak in a play that was once performed at Poquam.

In vain Jarvis argued.

"Why this secrecy?" he demanded. "If you know where the missing document is hidden, tell me. I don't like the idea of cruising about a strange house at midnight on a fool's errand."

"Very well, then," said Clint; "leave it alone, mister."

"How did you learn the secret?" grumbled the lawyer.

"I listened," calmly answered the boy. "Come, let me lie down until one o'clock, and have a rest. I'm tired. You haven't been up to your chin in water for several hours to day."

Although Jarvis felt annoyed, he could not refrain from smiling, and said:

"There, rest yourself. I'll keep watch. If you deceive me I'll never forgive you."

"Never is a long time," snickered Clint, as he seated himself on the lounge at the foot of the bed. "You don't want to find that will worse than I do."

He stretched himself out, and in ten minutes was fast asleep.

"I wonder whether he really knows?" mused the lawyer, suspiciously. "If it's only guess-work, I shall feel mad enough to eat my head. I wish he'd tell me."

Clinton slumbered until within a few minutes of one o'clock, when he was awakened by Jarvis, who whispered:

"Time's up."

"Put out the light and follow me," said the lad.

"You must take off your boots."

"But——" began the other.

"Oh, there isn't any but about it," returned Clint. "Them old folks sleep with one eye open, an' Ketchum keeps a loaded gun by his bedside."

"Is it hidden in their room?" nervously inquired Jarvis.

"The gun?" chuckled the boy.

"No, the document," breathed the lawyer.

"Scotch?" whispered Clint; "that's downstairs. Now, off boots an' out with the light and follow me."

Jarvis thought of the large fee he would receive if he won his client's case, so complied; not without feeling great misgiving as to the result of the adventure.

His companion opened the door, and the pair descended the stairs to the hall below.

It was a comical sight: an elderly lawyer and a rat of a boy picking their way in a strange house, like a pair of burglars.

The clock, which stood in the parlor, was a tall, mahogany-cased affair, with a tick like the click of a pistol.

Clint opened the door of the room, then when his companion was inside, closed it and ignited a match, with which he lighted a kerosene lamp that was on the table.

"Now, where is it?" said Jarvis.

"In that grandfather's clock," replied the boy, with a significant wink. "The Ketchums know all about it, and are only waiting for a bigger reward."

"Oh, they are, are they?" chuckled Jarvis, entering into the spirit of the hunt. "Well, we'll disappoint them, my son."

They procured candles from the kitchen, and unlocking the door of the clock, peeped in.

The pendulum swung back and forth, and the dust hung in fluffs and tufts on the panels; however, there was no sign of a paper; nothing but weights, cords, machinery and dust.

Jarvis unhooked the swinging-rod and drew it forth, causing the machinery to move "click-click" with great rapidity.

"Quick!" he said to Clint. "Get in and hold up the candle. The will may be hidden behind the face."

The boy obeyed, and after peering aloft, withdrew his dust-crowned head and whispered:

"I can see it. It's at the top of the works, under a bell."

"Come out!" excitedly exclaimed Jarvis. "Let me get at it!"

Now, the paper he saw was an old letter Biggleswade had stuffed in between the bell and the alarm-striker, the clock being provided with that attachment.

Clinton stepped forth, and shaking the particles of dust from his head, handed the candle to his companion, saying:

"Didn't I tell you it was here?"

Jarvis squeezed himself into the clock-case and endeavored to reach the paper.

"Confound it!" he muttered. "I'm afraid to insert my hand among the machinery."

"Let me try," earnestly pleaded Clint. "Put those books in the bottom of the case for me to stand on, then I can reach it."

"Good boy!" said the lawyer, as he emerged from the doorway. "I'll give you something handsome for this."

"I'm doing it for mother," whispered Clint, whose eyes snapped with excitement. "Mind, I'm to have a thousand dollars!"

"Yes, yes! Go right in and fetch that," replied his companion. "You're a smart boy."

"You don't think I'm green now, do you?"

"No, my son; get in."

"You think I'll make a good lawyer—eh?"

"Yes, yes! Come, don't ask a million questions. Get that document!"

"Listening has its useful—don't you consider?"

"Yes, yes, yes!" cried Jarvis. "Go in, go in, my son!"

Clint piled the books on to the floor of the clock, and stepping inside, took the candle from the lawyer, who was as pale as milk.

"Say," he said, "how much will you and uncle get out of the job?"

Jarvis ground his teeth.

"You'll get a good pile, won't you?" continued the lad. "Pears to me I'm working too cheap."

"Will you get that paper?" hissed Jarvis, threateningly.

"I can hear some one stirring above."

This scared the boy, and raising the candle aloft, he reached up his left hand, which he inserted among the works.

The hot grease dropped upon his fingers, and the dust descended in fine streams and blinded him.

Just as he touched the document he disturbed a catch, which flew up and set the works moving like a buzz-saw.

In his agitation he got his hand entangled in the wheels.

These drew in his fingers and held them as in a vise.

At the same time the alarm, free from its muffler, rang out a rattling peal.

"Oh-owch-owh!" yelled the boy.

Jarvis thrust in his head and cried:

"What's the matter?"

At that instant, Ketchum, gun in hand, entered the room.

Behind him came his wife, carrying a stout stick.

"Owch—oh—h! Oh!" roared Clinton, writhing in the clock-case like a worm on a hook. "Oh, help! help!"

Ketchum was one of those idiots who, if they have a gun in their hands, think they ought to shoot something.

He did not stop to ask any questions, or even glance at the persons in the room, but raising his weapon, pulled the trigger. When the smoke cleared away he saw Jarvis lying on the floor.

(To be continued.)

"Inquisitive Clinton" was commenced in No. 898.

IN A QUANDARY.

SEVERAL years ago the pastures of Queensland were so thickly infested with weeds that the sheep began to perish from starvation. These weeds were of a variety which is held in high estimation by the ordinary English rabbit, and a cargo of rabbits was introduced. The rabbits ate the weeds, but, unfortunately, did not stop here, but kept on multiplying and devouring every living thing, and swarmed into the streets and houses to that extent that life became almost unendurable to the unhappy Australian. It was plainly evident that unless something was speedily done to suppress the rabbits, Queensland would become a wilderness howling with those hungry beasts. The rabbits had exterminated the weeds, but a new kind of animal was needed to exterminate the rabbits. A shipload of weasels was accordingly imported, and at present they are revelling in rabbits. The rabbits fairly melt away before them, and the weasels, with delight beaming from their happy faces, pursue them to their hiding-places and massacre them by thousands. The only question that bothers the Queenslanders is what they will do with the weasels when they have devoured the rabbits, and the only solution to the problem is that the next crop must be wild cats, as they are the only animals that can take care of the weasels.

A NOISY fellow annoys a fellow.

A LATE CHRISTMAS GIFT.

THE rays of a January sunset sparkled in the jewels on Mary Milburn's fingers, as, standing in her bay-window, she wistfully examined a plain, leather note-case.

On its few coarse pages no sign or word was traced.

"This insignificant—this meaningless thing, again and again I wonder at it!" she thought.

Wearily she turned her gaze toward the frozen landscape without, where, from the church-spire, and many a flashing window-pane and luminous snow-covered roof, the sunlight radiated in brilliant contrast to columns of smoke rising from village-chimneys and suggesting fireside love to her lonely grandeur.

Tears swelled into the earnest, longing eyes.

"It was very cruel," she softly murmured. "When he handed me this trifle from the Christmas-tree his face was so full of eagerness—and then the strange expectancy of his manner when he came to me later in the evening, followed by his abrupt departure and the sudden resignation with which he astonished the whole parish the following Sunday—it is almost incomprehensible."

The wondering dreamer was startled by a crash, and a general concussion of solids.

"Now Ted is tumbling, as usual, when he carries mamma's tea-trây," she thought.

Loud, discordant howls issued from the hall below—for once Ted himself had suffered with the china.

Miss Milburn, stepping to the staircase, saw the ebony and ivory of the incorrigible waiter-boy's face in full relief against the marble hall, distorted like a gutta-percha head, while his long arms and legs played accompaniment to his cries of "Murder! Mercy! Help!"

"Hush, Ted!" said the young lady; "you will alarm mamma, and make her worse."

"I'm worse myself!" roared Ted. "I'm smashed! I'm kilt!"

Servants arrived on the scene, and, soon after, reported to Miss Milburn that, though the boy was not seriously hurt, he thought he was, and was imploring to see "Miss Mary."

"Oh!" he cried, as she approached his bedside, "are you sure—are you *sure* I ain't a-dyin'?"

"I am sure, Ted," she replied, "that you *will* die——"

"O-o-w-a-w!" roared Ted, "I knowed it; I feel it comin' on!"

"Not now," added Miss Milburn; "but some time, and I wish you *now* to resolve to become a better boy."

"I will, Miss Mary; I'll be a perfect, reg'lar saint," sobbed Ted. "Only jest let me live a little while and see. I won't mind dyin' *bimeby*."

"Your life is not in my hands, Ted; you must pray to God."

"Oh, Miss Mary! *you* ask; God ain't goin' to refuse a common little nigger-boy to a lady like you. You'll see how useful and good I'm goin' to be to you."

"You must pray yourself, Ted—not alone to live, but to be made good. God hears all alike, without regard to color."

"'Tain't that, Miss Mary—'tain't 'cause I'm black. Granny's blacker, and she's allers a-makin' out as God's been a-answer'd her; but I h'ain't prospered, nor the dishes h'ain't prospered, and it's all along of what I did to the parson. God thinks a heap of a parson, I specs—don't he?"

"Do you mean," asked the young lady, "that you have been wicked enough to play any of your pranks on Doctor Lott?"

"Bah! no, ma'am; who'd think of worritin' *him*? I mean that tall, parsimonious, sanctified-toned-looking one as used to be hangin' round yer all hours?"

With flashing eyes Miss Milburn bent eagerly forward. Ted was just then seized with a twinge of pain, and his next words were:

"Oh, Miss Mary! are you *sure* I ain't kilt?"

"I am perfectly sure, Ted, that you are not nearly so much hurt as you deserve. Now tell me this instant what you have on your mind."

"And so I will," answered the invalid, becoming eagerly confidential. "This is how it was: You sent me down there Christmas Eve to wait on him, and when I went into the church and didn't see nobody I jest clapped my eyes to the crack of the door in where he hanged his gownds, and there he sot, writin' suthin' that was awful interestin' to himself; then he slipped what he'd writ into a morrocker case, and came to the door suddint, 'most afore I could git under a bench. Easy enough I knew, by the mussel-kind of a way he carried it, 'twas a love-letter; but, true as you live, Miss Mary, when he'd gone, I found 'twas *your* name he'd pinned onto the nasty thing. I knowed well enough that, after all the fine, dandy fellers you've sent a-flyin', you warn't goin' to take up with such a owl as him; so, when I'd got done laffin', I just slipped the letter out of the case and——"

"Ted!" cried Miss Milburn, in overwhelming consternation.

"Oh, please, *please* forgive me," ejaculated the astonished boy. "I *am* sorry, Miss Mary, I *am*. I never once thought you'd care!"

"Where is it? Have you kept it?" responded Miss Mary, growing pale with agony and suspense. The awe-struck boy pointed with his dark, lanky finger, and said:

"In my chist!"

Near the bottom of his receptacle for rags, strings, fish-hooks and general "plunder," Miss Milburn found a note in the well-remembered chirography.

With panting breast and flashing eyes she sped to her own apartment.

Then she read those words that her lonely soul had thirsted for.

He *had* loved her. Just one month ago, in that blessed Christmas-time, he had offered her the treasure of a true, manly, Christian heart.

Where was he now? What must he think of her?

With glowing heart and brilliant cheeks, the beautiful, love-illuminated girl paced her floor, while a resolve assumed a definite form in her mind.

Another crisis was at that moment impending over the life of the man whose image filled her thoughts.

When he believed himself to have been cavalierly treated by the girl he loved so passionately, he felt that to remain near her would be to jeopardize his power to devote his life to his Maker's service.

He was not a nature for idle repining. He went immediately to New York, placed himself temporarily at the service of a hard-working clergyman, and, at the same time, sent in his name as candidate for employment in a distant missionary field.

On the very day when Mary Milburn read his letter of love, the clergyman he assisted said to him:

"Woodward, I have found just the very thing for you. You must marry Nellie Monroe, and join the missionary enterprise to start next month."

If the reverend gentleman had looked at Mr. Woodward, he would have seen the flash of agony that overspread his face; but he regarded the young man as a sort of religious automaton. Without raising his eyes from the desk at which he wrote, he continued:

"Miss Monroe has long desired to devote herself and her money to the cause; she is a favorite of mine—a very intelligent, good girl. I wonder I had not thought sooner of yourself in connection with her!"

When a gentleman praises a lady for being *intelligent* and *good*, it is safe to conclude that she is neither *handsome* nor *attractive*; otherwise—to the shame of men be it spoken—they would enumerate these charms first. Mr. Woodward felt all this without actually thinking it; and moreover, had she been as lovely as Helen, the idea would have been no less repulsive to him.

Taken thus by surprise, he could only stammer forth that he "had not thought of marrying;" which we know was scarcely the literal truth.

"Time you did, then; time you did!" responded the senior, pushing back his chair. "And no time like the present! *Now* is a magic word to succeed on, and *now* I am going to call upon Nellie Monroe. Come with me."

The young man drifted on the tide of the elder's energy.

Miss Monroe was neither so old nor so plain as Mr. Woodward was prepared to find a rich girl who wanted to go on a mission. Indeed, she was only deficient in that magnetic attractiveness which is indefinable.

Mr. Woodward reflected:

"Love is out of my reach—peace, even, I may not enjoy here. Why not accept this fate this opening for change of place and active usefulness?"

Yet, when the young lady, who bowed to with the elder clergyman, glanced occasionally, with furtive interest, toward the younger, he realized very keenly how it must feel to be put up at auction.

A LATE CHRISTMAS GIFT.—"'HUSH, TED!' SAID THE YOUNG LADY; 'YOU WILL ALARM MAMMA, AND MAKE HER WORSE.' 'I'M SMASHED! I'M KILT!' ROARED TED."

When they rose to depart, the old enthusiast glanced significantly from one to the other of his young friends.

He truly loved them both.

"My children," he said, "aged as I am, and almost ready to lay aside my armor, I can but envy you your opportunities. God put it into your hearts to use them for His glory!"

Involuntarily, the young man extended his hand to the maiden.

As nearly as his confusion would permit him to mean anything, he merely meant "Good-by"; but when he felt the eager clasp with which she responded, and met the soft, earnest appeal in her eyes, his consternation was complete—without the "God bless you!" which sounded to him more a condemnation than a benediction from the lips of the aged match-maker.

In the open air Mr. Woodward could, for a moment, scarcely distinguish between the sky and the sidewalk; but by the time his companion addressed him he had collected himself.

"Do you think," he excitedly asked—"do you maintain that it is Christian to make of love and wedlock a traffic like this?"

"My son," solemnly responded the elder, "there is no deception, and where mutual respect is, love must ensue; it is to your Maker's work you have devoted your life, not to earthly passion."

Mr. Woodward started at this home-thrust.

"Give me time," he pleaded. "Let me consider in private."

And, almost brusquely, he turned away from his companion.

Solitude looked very grim to the young man as he fitted the key into his boarding-room door.

He even grasped eagerly at the silent greeting of a letter.

"If Mr. Woodward will call on Thursday evening at No. — Fifth Avenue, he will find a Christmas present awaiting him."

No signature.

Startled, he reread—Christmas! Christmas! The word thrilled through his memories. A Christmas gift in January! The thought awakened a bewildering hope that he felt was wild.

During the following day Mr. Woodward tortured himself unmercifully. He felt ashamed of the influence the anonymous note had upon him, and feared himself the dupe of some cruel joke; yet the thought of how nearly he stood committed to a stranger like Miss Monroe became maddening to him.

The evening found him prompt at the mysterious rendezvous.

He was shown into a spacious drawing-room, where a middle-aged lady rose with gracious greeting.

"It devolves upon me," she said, "to bestow upon Mr. Woodward a gift of such singular value that I must be pardoned if I am particular in the preliminary of identification. Are you the gentleman who wrote this letter?"

She took up the little note-case; out of it she drew the unanswered letter.

Mr. Woodward stepped eagerly forward, flushed, then turned pale.

"I am indeed the writer," he gasped, a great hunger of questioning hope in his eyes and voice.

"And you still entertain these sentiments?" added the strange lady, in encouraging tones.

The gentleman so kindly addressed was too deeply agitated to reply. He buried his face in his hands.

A door at the end of the room was softly opened. A graceful form glided toward him.

"Will you not look at me—will you not, even now, accept your Christmas gift?" said the voice of Mary Milburn.

Mr. Woodward looked to find a trembling hand extended. "Great God, I thank thee!" he ejaculated, as he clasped his living Christmas gift.

Later Mr. Woodward told Mary Milburn about his missionary opening, and she said she thought there were plenty of people to convert at home, and he had better begin with that wicked boy, Ted.

A PIOUS BEAR JOINS A CHURCH CONGREGATION AT NORTH CREEK, N. Y.

A PIOUS BEAR OF THE ADIRONDACKS.

BEARS are very numerous in the Adirondack region this year, and four appeared in broad daylight at North Creek not long ago. One Sunday recently a large black bear entered the church at that place, just after the minister had commenced his sermon, and walked leisurely up the passageway until he reached nearly the middle of the church. The women jumped upon the top of the seats and screamed at the height of their voices; all was confusion, and the services came to a stand-still. Bruin raised himself upon his haunches and calmly surveyed the scene, and, seeming satisfied with his scrutiny, deliberately walked out. He was followed, but escaped.

CURIOUS COMPANIONS.

IT is said that misery makes strange bed-fellows, and a case was recently witnessed in Jersey City in which privation certainly brought about a strange companionship. A family had just moved into a house which had stood empty for several weeks in that city, and found there a cat which, from its pinched and starved appearance, had evidently been left there by the family who had last occupied the house, and had found very poor foraging.

Taking pity on the creature, the lady of the house set down a pan of milk, which Tabby soon began to lap up eagerly, when presently out came a rat, which also looked as though it had been living on short commons for some time, and making straight for the pan, commenced helping the cat to empty it. Each one was so hungry, and so intent upon getting something to eat, as to be quite oblivious of its mortal enemy, and so they went on quietly eating until the pan was emptied. Then the rat ran back to its hole, without any effort on the part of the cat to capture it.

The rat, however, has not since been seen to make any effort to renew the acquaintance then formed, and it is probable that on another occasion it might not find Tabby so complaisant as she was when hunger made her so forgetful of her traditional character.

MY NARROW ESCAPE.

MORNING in Mexico. Bright, glorious, inspiring morning in a land of flowers, sunshine, delicious breezes, open plains, and wondrous woods teeming with strange life, and where, on rising with the sun, the air seemed as inebriating as so much champagne.

I was there on a half-naturalist, half-hunting expedition, and a more invigorating, delightful time I never spent than at the hacienda of my friend, John Smith—or, as his savanero called him, Don Juan Smiddi.

He had been out in Mexico leading the free life of a grazier and savage farmer for ten years; he spoke Spanish like a native, and, with his black moustache, closely cropped black hair, pointed beard and swarthy face, he would have passed for the best don amongst them.

"And do you really like the life?" I said to him.

"Like it, my dear boy! Why, I'm a king here. What are my troubles? Trifles about the stock—squabbles amongst my men, upon which I deliver judgment. What, as to my advantages—what are they not? I should have died of consumption at home, a poor man; here I am sound as a roach; money comes as fast as I want it, and, in place of a narrow, beggarly, tatting civilization, I have freedom and the joys of this half-barbaric life. You have been here now two months. What do you say to it?"

"That I want to stop," I said, merrily.

And I staid.

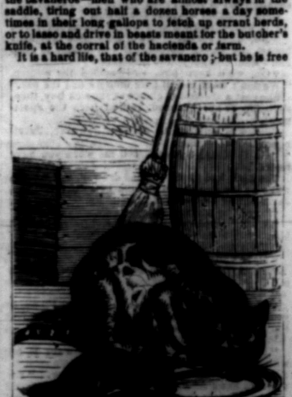
There was a hunt in progress—a hunt for a simarron—and I wanted to go and join in.

Now as I had never heard of a simarron before, I shall take it for granted that you never heard of such a creature till I mentioned it here, and I shall proceed to explain what it is.

At a hacienda like my friend's, situated amongst wild pampas and adjoining the primeval forest, where you could gallop for miles and still be on the land he considered as appertaining to him, one of the principal elements of wealth consists of cattle.

These animals partake to a certain extent of the nature of the country, and have a decided tendency to wildness; but the cows, bulls, calves, and the generality of the oxen, are pretty well managed by the savaneros—men who are almost always in the saddle, tiring out half a dozen horses a day sometimes in their long gallops to fetch up errant herds, or to lasso and drive in beasts meant for the butcher's knife, at the corral of the hacienda or farm.

It is a hard life, that of the savanero;—but he is free



CURIOUS COMPANIONS.—A CAT AND A RAT EATING OUT OF THE SAME DISH.

and happy; he has to face the savage attacks of fierce members of the herd, falls from his horse, injuries from savage beasts, bites from tarantulas and snakes, and to tend the wounds received by the herds he watches; but his greatest difficulty is with the simarrons.

Every now and then an ox, which has been brought up to the corral for turning into beef, tallow and leather, turns savage, breaks away, and, wise from his experience of what is intended for him, turns wild, and goes in for a life in the woods. Now, this wild ox, which becomes intensely savage, even as it grows active, swift and beautiful in its muscular proportions, is called by the Mexican herdsmen, or savanero, a simarron.

A cattle-grazier looks upon the escape of one of these beasts as a serious loss—not so much from the intrinsic value of the one ox, but on account of its being the thin end of the wedge for what might be very serious from other animals being so badly watched that they might follow its example; for, when it is known that there is a simarron in the forest, the owner of the hacienda gives his men strict orders to lasso or shoot the beast; and if this is not done soon, in consequence of its fierceness and cunning, the final word is given, and it is this: "No more beef will be served out to the men; they must kill the simarron, and cut him up."

Of course, this means first catch your wild ox, and a general hunt follows.

It was to this hunt I was going on the beautiful morning I have named.

Smith said I had better not go, when I told him my wishes the night before.

"It is madness," he said. "No one can stand it but a man who has grown into his saddle."

"I can ride," I said.

"Yes, but that is not all," he said. "These simarrons are regular demons of cunning and strength. You see one; and, if he does not charge you, he dashes right at the forest behind him, apparently at a great curtain of leaves. He knows his place, and away he disappears; the leaves close behind him, and he is gone. He can gallop through the wood, but it would take you an hour, sword in hand, to cut yourself a way even through the leaves that bar the way."

"I'll risk all that," I said, "for the sake of the adventure."

"Very well," he said, smiling; "go, and I'll give you half an hour. At the end of that time you'll have had enough of it."

"We will see," I said, laughing.

"We will," he said. "You had better follow Cervantes; he is the oldest and most trustworthy of the men, and I dare say he will try to protect you as well as give you a good view of the hunt. What are you going to ride?"

"Black Don," I said.

"No, no, old fellow," he replied. "He is too good and too handsome for the purpose. You'll bring him back with his flanks torn with thorns, if not with horns, and his eyes cut out. Take one of my old savanero's."

I agreed, and at five o'clock that morning the *patio* was all astir with the mounted men, laughing, chatting, and eager for the hunt, while those who had to stay looked doleful and discontented.

I heard the clattering of hoofs as I went out, and one of the men brought me a miserable-looking little steed. His knees were chipped, his tail ragged, and his coat none of the best; but after I had been on his back half an hour, I found he was a horse of good blood and mettle, while he had the training and sagacity which enabled him to avoid at full gallop the various dangerous obstacles in a place bristling with fallen trunks. He was also wonderfully surefooted in rocky places, and could change from a gallop to a walk with great rapidity.

Altogether, I found that I was mistaken in rashly judging the qualities of my steed, so I would not venture to say anything about it to Cervantes.

He was a great, gaunt, Spanish half-breed, dry, gray-haired and angular, and moved in jerks, like an automaton. He put me greatly in mind of Don Quixote. A cup of coffee made us friends, and at last, with a cheer, we set off.

By six o'clock we had entered the virgin forest, a sombre, strangely-oppressive place. The track of animals had grown more scarce, and disappeared. Cervantes, however, seemed to know his way, and led the train of horsemen steadily on, vowing by all the saints that he would bring back the simarron, dead or alive.

Every man carried his strong lasso of green hide, and had at his belt the inevitable machete, that strong half-breed between a knife and a sword, who had had a relative once that was a butcher's chopper. For there no man thought of stirring without his machete, which was in frequent requisition for cutting the longer creepers and brushwood that intercepted our way.

Some of the men carried a gun, while those who were not so armed had their ordinary herdsman's pricker or lance, mounted at the end with a keen, long spear-blade, used upon such occasions, and a thrust from which would be fatal to any animal.

These spears, I heard, were of excellent temper and elasticity, and were for the most part forged by the native blacksmiths out of barrel-stakes.

MY NARROW ESCAPE.—"'HERE! HI, CERVANTES!' I SHOUTED TO THE OLD RASCAL IN FRONT WHO WAS TO TAKE CHARGE OF ME. BUT HE WAS SO INTERESTED IN THE PURSUIT THAT HE TOOK NO NOTICE OF ME."

I can't say much for the guns which my companions carried. They looked as if they had dated back to the days of the conquest of Mexico, and to me they seemed as if they ought rather to have been in the collection of an antiquary than in the hands of the poor people whom they were bound to kill some day or other.

About seven o'clock there was a short council held, and then the party separated, leaving Cervantes and me together.

"I say, old fellow," I said, "you must go a little easier now. I'm not up to this bush-hacking. I can't go on cutting these lianas and things. My arm aches so now that I shall never be able to take aim."

Cervantes answered not a word, but went on sawing away at the creepers that impeded his progress, while I was lying flat on the back of my horse, going down its side, creeping under it—doing, in short, a kind of monkey gymnastics to avoid not only being knocked off by branches hanging in wild vines, or torn to death by thorny creepers; for, no matter what took place, or how rough was the dense undergrowth, on went my horse, following closely the one before him.

After about two minutes of these exhibitions of circus-riding without a circus, I began to think very seriously of what John Smith had said, and I gave up, dead-beat.

My legs were torn, my loins bruised, my shoulders crushed, my cartridge-belt was half dragged off, my clothes ragged, and I felt full of thorns and bits of dead stick. As for my stirrups, I could feel them no longer; the perspiration ran down my face and off my hands.

"Here! hi, Cervantes!" I shouted to the old rascal in front, who was to take charge of me.

But he was so interested in the pursuit that he took no notice of me.

For, just then, the forest began to echo with the wild cries of his companions; and, with all the old hunter's instinct aroused in him, he hurried on, and in five minutes I was left alone.

"Losing the simarron!" I gasped.

And, as there was just room, I got off my horse and fastened his bridle to a branch, for he wanted to follow my guide's example and leave me alone.

"Oh, for a good drink of water!" I cried, as I regretted coming without a gourd slung at my side. What was I to do? Parched as I was, I felt that I must drink or faint; so I began to look about me till, on the left, it appeared to me that the undergrowth looked greener—a sure sign of the neighborhood of water.

What I wanted to find was one of the chasms or cracks in the rocky earth, which occur frequently in these latitudes, and at the bottom of which there is generally a stream.

"Come along," I cried to my horse; and, unfastening his bridle, I led him with one hand, while I advanced slowly, keeping my machete going to cut down the creepers and bushes, without doing which I could not have advanced an inch.

Now, you kind friends who have never traveled, just pause for a moment, and listen to this arboreal mathematical sum, and then you will have some idea of what I had to encounter.

Take ten square yards of the toughest and oldest blackberry-bramble thicket, and multiply it by a twenty-year-old quickset hedge. Next, square the product. Cube it. Add ten thousand cubes of aloes. Multiply by eight million cacti. And the product will be something like this virgin forest.

As I suspected, I arrived soon at the edge of a little cañon, whose further side was not many yards away; but how deep this crack in the soil was I could not tell, for the dense vegetation.

It seemed to me very evident that my guide had been maneuvring so as to get to the head of this cañon, where there would probably be a good spot for a shot; but he had gone, and all I knew of the whereabouts of him and his companions was a distant shout now and then.

I wished I had followed him, because then I could have sat down and rested, and perhaps got a shot at the game as well.

Perhaps there would be time now, but I could do nothing until I had some water.

At my feet was this ravine, with its precipitous sides; so, hunting about, I found a lump of rock nearly covered with leaf-soil, and digging it out with my machete, after being nearly hung up three or four times by my gun, which was slung over my shoulder, I replaced my great hunting-knife in its sheath, and carried the stone to the edge of the ravine.

Crash—rush—splash!

The stone forced its way through the dense green undergrowth as I threw it out into the middle, and evidently it fell into the water about a hundred feet or so below where I stood.

"Stay here, old boy," I said to my horse, as I saw that he was well secured; and then, going once more to the edge, I prepared to descend.

"A nice place for jaguars, serpents, centipedes, and unclean beasts of all descriptions!" I thought, as I picked out a likely spot; and then, clinging to the branches, bushes and creepers, I began to descend.

Gres. trees grew from the sides, regular forest monarchs, and every minute, as I slowly crept down the great green chimney I made for myself, some great, snag-like, old, half-dead bough would seem to stick itself straight out on purpose to hook the strap of my gun, and stop my further progress.

I should think this happened a dozen times; but I would rather not part from so valuable a companion, and down I kept on, slipping and climbing slowly, sending little, vicious-looking snakes and lizards scuffling off, till I got about eighteen feet from the water, when I was so thoroughly hitched by a short, dead bough sticking from a huge trunk as I clung to a liana, that I was glad to slip out of the sling, leave the gun hanging, and slide down the rest of the way, thanking my stars that I had not broken my neck in the attempt. There ran a beautiful, clear rill of water at my feet, and, stooping, I drank heartily and long, scaring a lovely little green frog as I did so.

Then, rising, I was admiring the beauty of the green, palm-like plants in the cool, gloomy, shady place, and it seemed to me that the best thing I could do was to walk slowly up the bed of the little rivulet to the head, instead of climbing up the steep side of the cañon.

I had made up my mind to this, and climbed up a step or two to get my gun, when I heard a savage roar, and directly after a splendid beast came into sight, galloping down the bed of the stream at a headlong pace with part of a lasso twisted round one of its short, sharp-curved horns.

"No gun!" I groaned, as the beast gave a jerk at me with his head, which brought a horn within a few inches of my waistband, and then it was gone.

I had scarcely got my breath, which was taken away by the suddenness of the attack, when I heard the stones rattle in the bed of the stream, and the savage-looking beast galloped back.

It stopped short opposite to me, lowered its head and shook it, looking at me alternately with each of its fiery eyes while its glossy flanks heaved, its tail lashed the air, and with one hoof it pawed and tore up the stones and water.

I was standing, holding on with one arm to the rock, and I regret to say that I had not presence of mind enough to draw my machete, and try to do the matador work of the bull-fighter. All I could do was to stand still watching my fierce enemy, expecting each moment that it would dash forward and bury its horns in my chest. I believe there were only a few minutes' suspense, but it seemed like an hour before there came plainly heard from above the shouts of the savaneros; when the animal threw up its head, snorted, and, turning, dashed away down the leafy tunnel formed by the trees arching over the stream, and was gone. I gave a sigh of relief, and then felt mad with myself for being such a pluffy huntsman as to leave my gun.

So, giving up the idea of going up the stream, partly because I must climb up to get my gun, and partly because I heard my companions overhead, I began to climb, got my gun, slung it with some difficulty across my shoulder, and then, at the end of a minute, got it off again, for it kept on catching the trees and arresting my progress in this really thorny and difficult climb.

When, at last, after endless slips and scratchings, I got within thirty feet of the top, I had to stop, for I could get no further without walking like a fly; and I was about to descend and try to get to the top by going up the stream, when I heard voices, and, on shouting, Cervantes answered,

"Hallo!" he said, "how did you get there?"

"Never mind," I said, sulkily, as I peered up at his grim face looking over the edge of the precipice—"never mind how I got here. How am I to get out?"

For answer he shouted to some of his companions, and then lowered down his lasso.

"Hold tight," he said.

And I did; and was ignominiously hauled out by half a dozen men, to mount my horse, scratched, bruised, and worried by the worst temper I was ever in.

My sourness was not greater than that of my companions, especially that of one poor fellow, who had, thrown his lasso, catching the simarron by one horn, when the lasso broke; but not until I a owner was dragged out of the saddle by the animal's rush, and one arm was broken.

We had a dreary ride back. Don Juan, as they called him, bullied the whole party, and laughed at me, saying: "I told you so."

But I was not beaten. I went that same afternoon and found Cervantes. "Could you find the place where that beast sleeps at night?" I said.

"Yes," he replied; "but what's the good of that?"

"I'll show you," I said. "You and I will go and shoot him to-night."

I set to with my preparations, getting an old frying-pan, in which I mixed some resin and cotton refuse. To the handle I tied a forked stick, arranging it with stakes and stumps so that the pan would hang behind me from my shoulders at about a couple of feet distance, leaving my hands at liberty for the use of my gun.

Cervantes grinned, but he was ready at the appointed time, and we rode through the darkness to a more open part of the wood, where we arrived at the end of a three hours' journey.

I was horribly tired, but I did not show it; and Cervantes having announced that we were within a hundred yards of an opening where he believed the simarron would be found, we alighted, secured our horses, saw that our guns were ready, and then, going softly on, we crept close to the opening, when I made my final preparations.

"What are you going to do, master?" said Cervantes.

"Light the resin," I said, "and shoot the simarron when he comes forward out of curiosity to see the meaning of the blaze."

"Good!" said my guide, with a grunt of complacency; and then, striking a match, I set fire to my cotton and resin, the contents of the pan blazed up, and with it slung behind my back I walked forward, seeing well all that was before me, without being dazzled by the flame.

The place was eighty or ninety yards across, and Cervantes and I went cautiously on, step by step, watching the trees lit up by the blaze and the black shadows it cast, ever silent and watchful, till we were nearly across, when, disappointed, disheartened and worn-out, I exclaimed, in a tone of disgust:

"I say, old fellow, he isn't here!"

As I spoke something big seemed to bounce up just at my back.

I knew it was the great brute we were in search of; but his appearance was so sudden, and took me so thoroughly by surprise, that back I went, stumbled over a tuft of shrub and nearly lost my balance, while I gave the pan such a jerk that a drop of the hot, sputtering, burning resin fell on to my bare neck, making me forget wild bull, gun, everything in my agony as I dashed the burning resin down.

As I recovered somewhat I knew that my chance

MY NARROW ESCAPE.—"I HEARD A SAVAGE ROAR, AND DIRECTLY AFTERWARD A SPLENDID BEAST CAME INTO SIGHT, GALLOPING DOWN THE BED OF THE STREAM AT A HEADLONG PACE."

MY NARROW ESCAPE.—"I FELT SAVAGE ENOUGH TO PUNCH MY OWN HEAD, WHEN BANG WENT CERVANTES'S GUN, AND I SAW THE GREAT BEAST TOPPER AND FALL."

MY NARROW ESCAPE.—"ONE FELLOW'S LASSO CAUGHT THE SIMARRON BY ONE HORN. HE WAS DRAGGED OUT OF THE SADDLE BY THE ANIMAL'S RUSH, AND ONE ARM WAS BROKEN."

was gone, for the simarron had made a dash off to the left and I felt savage enough to punch my own head, when bang went Cervantes's gun, and I saw the great beast totter and fall, sufficient blaze arising from the overthrown pan to light up the whole scene.

I had not fired the shot, which was disappointing; but my turn came, for, stunned but not killed by the shot, the simarron rose and charged straight at me, the fire shining full on his broad front and short black horns, between which I sent a bullet with such effect that the huge beast went down on his knees, turned a complete somersault and rolled over motionless.

Cervantes gave a loud cheer, while I, with my machete, delivered the *coup de grace*, in case any life should be remaining in the huge body, after which we sat upon it contentedly, after lighting our pipes and piling wood over the blazing pan to keep up a fire; for our duty was to watch for the rest of the night to preserve our trophy from the jaguars that two or three times made night hideous with their howls, and had we not been there to scare them with the fire, doubtless they would have had some of the primest, gamest beef I ever ate for their supper.

As it was, we sat till morning, the old fellow telling me plenty of hunting stories, and then he fetched a party of the savaneros, who skinned, dressed, cut up and took home the beast in triumph. And beef was plentiful for the next few days.

Young Pickwick's Schooldays.

CHAPTER LXIII.

[Continued from page 342.]

SUDDENLY young Pickwick awoke. He raised himself on his elbow and listened attentively. He heard voices.

Noiselessly crawling toward the trap-door, he looked down.

He saw two dark figures below, and a sudden flash of lightning revealed to him the faces of Tom Ely and the heavy-eyed man.

Young Pickwick heard a movement behind him.

Dick and the Diddler had also been aroused by the voices below.

They sat up and were about to speak, when young Pickwick hurriedly, yet stealthily, crept toward them.

"Silence, on your life," he said, in a thrilling whisper. "Tom Ely and the heavy-eyed man are just under us."

For answer Dick and the Diddler gave young Pickwick a gentle pressure of the hand.

Mosey Morton still slumbered, undisturbed by what was going on below.

The heavy-eyed man paced restlessly up and down the barn.

"What a night!" he exclaimed, as another flash of forked-lightning lit up the leaden sky.

"It is an awful barn," returned Tom Ely, indifferently. "I wish we could have joined the gypsies before it came on."

The heavy-eyed man's answer was drowned by a terrific peal of thunder, which made the crazy old barn rock again.

"We did the Diddler nicely, thanks to Mosey Morton," observed Tom Ely. "I could have jumped for joy when I read the note he dropped upon my hat."

The three boys could scarcely refrain from an exclamation of astonishment.

Mosey Morton had tried to betray the Diddler into the hands of his enemies, and he had been caught in his own trap.

The three boys waited anxiously for the storm to abate.

They scarcely dared to breathe, with the heavy-eyed man so near them.

Suddenly Mosey Morton began to move uneasily. He sat up, yawning and rubbing his eyes.

He heard and recognized the voices below.

In an instant he had decided upon what course to pursue.

Before young Pickwick could utter threat or entreaty he set up a violent fit of coughing.

"Ha!" cried the heavy-eyed man; "what is that?"

"Some one is hiding in the loft," returned Tom Ely; "but we will soon have them out of it."

"We have you to thank for this, Mosey," cried young Pickwick, angrily.

"Oh, yes, blame me for an involuntary fit of coughing, do!" returned Mosey Morton.

Mr. Leadbitter and Tom Ely came rushing up to the loft.

The boys rapidly retreated as he advanced.

But the loft was not very extensive, and they were soon brought to bay.

"Back!" cried young Pickwick, catching up a pitchfork—"back, I say, or I'll run you through the body!"

The heavy-eyed man retreated, a little astonished at young Pickwick's daring.

He feared the boy would carry out his threat.

"Now is your time, Diddler," whispered young Pickwick. "Escape through the broken rafters under cover of the darkness."

The Diddler did not like to leave his friend in such a position, but young Pickwick had spoken so earnestly that he felt compelled to follow his advice.

"Boy," cried the heavy-eyed man, addressing young Pickwick, "put down that pitchfork."

"Is there anything else I can do to oblige you?" asked young Pickwick.

But at that moment he felt himself clasped round the waist by some one who had treacherously come behind, and the heavy-eyed man tore the pitchfork from his hand.

The heavy-eyed man had received a whispered communication from Mosey Morton, and he at once rushed in pursuit of the Diddler.

He dashed up to the thatched roof of the barn.

"I have got you now!" he cried, rushing up to where the Diddler was standing.

The Diddler gave a shout of defiance and leaped from the roof.

"I hope he has killed himself," thought the heavy-eyed man, "and saved me all further trouble."

But the Diddler, with his usual luck, alighted on a cart loaded with hay.

The heavy-eyed man gave an angry cry.

He made as if to leap after the Diddler, but thought better of it, and flung the pitchfork at him instead.

"Want to kill me, eh?" asked the Diddler, leaping to the other side of the cart. "You'll live to be hanged, 'pon honor."

The heavy-eyed man returned no answer to this save a muttered curse.

He hastily pushed himself through the broken rafters and re-entered the barn.

Mosey Morton it was who had so cunningly come up behind young Pickwick.

He was no match for that youth, who, his first surprise over, speedily freed himself.

Then the boys began fighting in the dark.

Tom Ely, finding himself attacked, exerted all his strength.

He silently went to work with the determination of spoiling the beauty of his opponent.

He was engaged in this laudable occupation when the heavy-eyed man re-entered the barn.

At this moment a sudden flash of lightning revealed the fact that Tom Ely was attacking Mosey Morton.

"Where are the other boys?" cried the heavy-eyed man.

Tom Ely and Mosey Morton felt foolish.

"They have gone," said the former; "went off while we were fighting in the darkness. I took Mosey for Pickwick, and have been giving him a warming."

The heavy-eyed man waited to hear no more.

He hurried out into the pouring rain, and rushed round to where the pony-cart was standing.

"Come down!" he cried, thinking the boys might be hidden under the hay.

No answer came.

The heavy-eyed man began tearing down the hay, swearing loudly as he flung it in the muddy yard.

"Hallos!" cried a rough voice, "what are you doing to that there hay?"

"What's that to you?" said Mr. Leadbitter, savagely, turning upon a man in top-boots.

It was Miffins's former master.

"I'll tell you what it is to do with me!" cried Farmer Raikes, with great indignation. "That's my hay, and I ain't a-going to have it mucked about."

The heavy-eyed man growled something that was very unlike a blessing.

He went on flinging down the hay.

"You are a nice man, you are," said the farmer, angrily. "Now I knows who comes and steals my property."

"Fool!" said the heavy-eyed man. "If I wanted to steal the hay is it likely that I should fling it down to the mud?"

"I wish I'd got my old man Miffins here," said the farmer. "He were a plucky man, he were."

But Mr. Raikes did not attempt to touch the heavy-eyed man; he felt afraid of him, somehow.

"No boys here," said the heavy-eyed man, aloud, as he looked at the empty cart.

"What boys?" asked the farmer, pricking up his ears.

"What's that to you?" said the heavy-eyed man, fiercely.

The farmer drew back.

He was beginning to feel thoroughly frightened.

"Well, I'm blowed!" he said; "ain't yer satisfied with chucking my property down in the mud? I think yer might keep a civil tongue in yer head."

"Man," cried Mr. Leadbitter, angrily, "don't try to thwart me."

"I'm not a-doing nothing to yer," returned Mr. Raikes. "I only ask what you are a-looking for?"

"I have been looking for some boys," said Mr. Leadbitter, shortly.

"Was one of 'em a skinny cove with a swivel eye?" asked Farmer Raikes.

"Yes," said the heavy-eyed man.

"Then that very identical chap comes to my door, and sez as how somebody was playing up old Harry in my barn," said the farmer.

"Curses light on him," cried the heavy-eyed man, fiercely.

"Don't cuss," said the farmer. "Cusses is like chickens, 'cause they always come home to roost, which reminds me that I'm a-losing all my fowls, and will do until I gets rid of them there gypsies."

"Hold your tongue," cried the heavy-eyed man.

The farmer was about to retort, but instead of doing so he darted forward.

He had seen two boys skulking near the barn.

After a sharp contest, in which the boys fared badly, he dragged them up to the heavy-eyed man.

"Are these chaps you want?" he asked.

"No," said the heavy-eyed man, angrily, as Tom Ely and Mosey Morton were pushed up to him. "Release those young gentlemen instantly!"

"Oh," said the farmer; "and what may them young gents be a-doing about my barn at this hour, if I may be taking a rude question?"

The heavy-eyed man made no reply.

Mr. Raikes's temper overcame his prudence.

He rushed after the heavy-eyed man, and clutched at the flowing skirts of his large cloak.

Next moment he found himself lying on his back.

He picked himself up, and went home, vowing vengeance.

The heavy-eyed man walked some distance with the two boys, and then came suddenly to a standstill.

"Here we part," he said, and the two boys hurried away, anxious to reach home before morning dawned and revealed them to those on the roof, who might feel inclined to punish them for their perfidy.

Meanwhile, young Pickwick and his chum had reached home.

On their way they had aroused the farmer, in the hope that he would cause the heavy-eyed man some annoyance.

The ladder had been lowered by the watchful friends, and they were safe upon the roof.

They were footsore and weary, and glad to retire to rest.

The others, however, did not neglect to take every precaution against being surprised by the enemy.

CHAPTER LXIV.

A SURPRISE.

MIFFINS was an early riser. No matter how deep his potations had been on the previous night, he was always brisk and lively in the morning.

So little Miffins had acquired this wholesome habit from his late occupation of farm-laborer.

On the morning after the boys had borrowed the doctor's chaise Miffins jumped out of bed, and after dipping his rather red nose in a basin of cold spring water, regarded Mr. Parrot attentively.

"I think I'll wake him," muttered Miffins; "it ain't healthy for a man to lie in bed after fire o'clock in the morning."

Taking up a water-jug, he emptied the contents over the sleeper.

Parrot immediately leaped up and jumped out of bed.

"I'll ask the doctor to have the roof mended," he muttered. "It leaks."

But at this moment he caught sight of Miffins with the water-jug in his hands.

"Oh, it's you, is it?" he cried. "Talk about boys. I'll eat my wig if you are not worse than twenty boys with your practical jokes."

"You ought to be much obliged," returned Miffins, drawing up the window-blind and letting the sunshine flood the room.

But Parrot was extremely ungrateful.

He did nothing but growl and grumble as he dressed himself.

The two men were just leaving the chamber when they came face to face with Tom Ely.

"Hallos!" cried Miffins; "what are you a-doing outside of my door?"

Without waiting for an answer he gave Tom Ely a heavy cuff on the side of the head.

"I'll eat my wig if ever I saw such a man," cried Mr. Parrot. "Can't you wait until you hear what the boy has to say before you beat him?"

"Well, speak out, do you hear?" cried Miffins, shaking Tom.

"I came to see you," said Tom.

"What for?" asked Miffins.

"Let me go, and then I'll tell you," returned Tom. "I came to give you some advice."

"Well, what is it?" asked Miffins. "Out with it, sharp."

"I know a splendid plan to get up on the roof," said Tom Ely, rather sulkily.

"I'm not going to climb a ladder again, if you mean that," said Miffins, decidedly. "I don't want no more water."

"I wasn't thinking of the ladder," returned Tom Ely. "That game has been played out once too often."

"Then what are you thinking of?" cried Miffins, acutely. "Why don't you tell us?"

"It is not a pleasant way, by any means," began Tom Ely. "You'll have to climb up the big chimney."

Miffins regarded Tom Ely doubtfully.

"I don't like the job," he observed.

"I'll eat my wig if I would do it," cried Parrot.

Miffins immediately altered his opinion.

He could never agree with Parrot.

"Actually, it is n't such a bad idea when you comes to think on it," said Miffins. "You shall go first, Parrot; you are a smaller man than me, and if yer sticks in the chimney I shall be able to pull yer down by the legs."

"I tell you I won't go!" cried Mr. Parrot, retreating within his bedchamber, and trying to lock the door.

But Miffins was too quick for him.

"You are a-coming along o' me," he cried, taking Mr. Parrot's arm; "and if you don't like to come quickly, I'll carry yer."

Mr. Parrot came to the conclusion that it would be more dignified to walk than to be borne along the passage like a refractory child.

The chimney which Tom Ely had alluded to was very large.

"No fear of getting stuck in the middle, eh?" asked Miffins.

"Not the slightest," returned Tom Ely.

The words brought little comfort to Mr. Parrot.

"Well, old chap," cried Miffins, "are we a-going to stand here all day?"

With a groan Mr. Parrot put his head up the chimney.

Miffins waited until the body and legs had disappeared, and then prepared to follow.

"Now then, old wigs," he cried, "look sharp!"

"I'm going up as fast as I can," said Mr. Parrot, in muffled tones.

The two men were about half way up the chimney when Parrot made this assertion.

"Well, you are a man to lie," observed Miffins, as he pinched Parrot's lean legs.

The indignant Parrot launched out, and his boot came in contact with Miffins's face.

"Yah!" cried Miffins, "I'm a-going to get down."

"Oh, are you?" thought Tom Ely, lighting some brown paper and shoving it up the chimney.

The two men saw the flare and were frightened.

"Oh, Lor', we shall be burnt alive!" yelled Miffins.

Mr. Parrot needed no second bidding.

Half-blinded by soot and smoke, the two men scrambled upward.

Mr. Parrot's head at last appeared above the chimney-pot.

He took a good look round.

Tinkie was the only boy to be seen.

He was supposed to be on watch, and was sitting with his back turned to Parrot, looking over the parapet.

Mr. Parrot stepped out on the roof and was speedily followed by Miffins.

The two men approached the unconscious Tinkie.

That young gentleman was humming a tune, and heard not the stealthy footsteps of the foe.

Suddenly a heavy hand was clapped over his mouth, and he found himself a prisoner.

He struggled violently to release himself, or, at all events, to release his mouth, and give a warning cry to arouse the others.

But Miffins was not such a fool to remove his huge hand from Tinkie's mouth until he had gagged the boy with his pocket-handkerchief.

The two men then found some pieces of rope and bound his arms and legs.

This done, they hid him behind a stack of chimneys, and softly entered the little house in which the other boys were still slumbering.

Young Pickwick understood what was going on as the

was going off to have bills posted, offering a reward for the recovery of his property, he heard the sound of approaching wheels.

He looked down the road and saw his horse and chaise coming along, Joey Snorter holding the reins.

The horse looked tired and fagged; it seemed ready to drop.

"Where have you been, sir?" cried the indignant doctor, as Joey Snorter drew near.

The chaise was followed at a respectful distance by young Pickwick and the Diddler.

"I lost my way," returned Joey Snorter, in answer to the doctor's question.

"Lost your way," exclaimed the angry doctor; "what do you mean? Why did you take out my chaise?"

"I was taken off with the horse and chaise agin' my will," returned Snorter.

"You are telling barefaced falsehoods, sir," cried the doctor; "you have been letting my chaise out to somebody, you vagabond."

"You're another," retorted the desperate Snorter.

The doctor banged him over the head with a well-filled nosebag.

"Take that, you impudent young thief!" he cried.

A number of boys, attracted by the noise, gathered round the chaise, and young Pickwick and the Diddler ventured to come forward.

They immediately guessed what had happened.

Joey Snorter, after treacherously deserting young Pickwick and his chums, had lost his way, and had been compelled to wander about all night.

"Pay him out, Waddle!" cried the Diddler; "give him something to remember you by."

"I tell you it was no fault of mine," said Joey Snorter, addressing the doctor.

"Don't presume to speak to me," cried Doctor Waddle, angrily.

"But I wants to explain," said the dismal page.

"I say you are to hold your tongue," cried the doctor.

He lifted up the nosebag, and once more brought it down on Joey Snorter's head.

"It's all along of Pickwick," cried Snorter. "I will say it if yer flays me alive."

"Don't answer me," cried the doctor, again lifting him over the head with the nosebag.

"Do you call this a free country?" cried Snorter, bursting into tears.

"Miffins, will you do me a favor?" cried the doctor.

"That depends on what it is," returned Miffins, cautiously.

"It isn't much," said the doctor; "I only want you to lift up your right foot."

"My foot is lifted," returned Miffins. "But why yer wants me to stand on one leg beats me."

"I wish you to apply the toe of your boot to the seat of Snorter's trousers."

Miffins grinned.

"I'll do it with all the pleasure in life," he said.

The kick he gave was tremendious.

It lifted Snorter some two feet in the air.

"Oh!" exclaimed Snorter.

"Get along, my beauty, if you don't want a dozen of what you have just had," cried Miffins.

Snorter thought it wise to take Miffins's advice.

He was making for the kitchen, when Waddle called him back.

"Come here, sir, directly!" cried the doctor.

"I don't want my ribs kicked in," returned Snorter; "and I ain't a-coming."

The doctor ran after him and caught him by the ear.

"Will you come and attend to the horse, you young wretch?" he cried.

"If you want it done do it yourself," said Joey Snorter.

"Then I'll give you a good thrashing," cried the doctor, suiting the action to the word.

Young Pickwick and his friends had no pity to bestow upon Joey Snorter.

He had deserted them in their hour of need, and they were glad to see the doctor pitching into him.

Having witnessed the discomfiture of Joey Snorter, young Pickwick and the Diddler were about to turn away, when the doctor stopped them.

"Boys," he said, "we bear each other no malice, I hope."

"None at all," said young Pickwick.

"Then perhaps you will shake hands with me," said the doctor.

Young Pickwick did so reluctantly.

He mistrusted Doctor Waddle.

"Look here," observed Miffins, addressing his host; "as you are a-going to give them boys a holiday, and will have nothing to attend to, I suggests that we gets up a picnic."

"A capital idea," said the doctor; "and I should like to take the boys with me."

"I'll eat my wig if I can see the fun of having a lot of boys to torment us," said Parrot.

After some discussion, his objections were overruled, but he grumblingly remarked that Doctor Waddle would be sorry before the day was over.

It was agreed that the boys should start in small parties, and join the doctor and his guests at the place where the picnic was to be held.

Away started young Pickwick and the Diddler, Dick and Fitzsham, all in high spirits.

They were boys in good health, and the sun was shining.

What more could they want to make them happy?

They no longer feared treachery on the part of Doctor Waddle, knowing that he would not dare to risk another outbreak.

Young Pickwick felt as long as he kept the Diddler in sight all was right.

The boys walked briskly along the green lanes, noticing not the dark figures that followed them like a shadow of ill omen.

They made the still Summer air ring with their merry laughter, as they passed through the fields and lanes.

At last they came to a wide ditch.

"We shall have to go round," said Fitzsham.

"That ditch is too wide to jump."

"I'm going to do it," cried the Diddler; "those who don't like the job had better stop at home."

As he spoke the Diddler leaped up in the air, and alighted on the other side of the ditch, safe and sound.

Dick and Pickwick, not to be behind their chum, also took the leap.

"I'm going back," said Fitzsham, looking first at his clean boots and then at the dirty ditch.

"Go home to your mamma," cried the Diddler.

Fitzsham colored.

He could not stand the Diddler's chaff.

Without another word he jumped across the ditch, clearing it beautifully.

"You have disappointed me," cried the Diddler.

"Why?" asked Fitzsham.

"I expected to see you tumble in."

And he broke into a run to avoid a playful punch of the head that Fitzsham had been about to administer to him.

Then they went along, leaping, laughing, and running.

They had gone some little distance, but were still in sight, when the heavy-eyed man came upon the scene, stepping from behind a tree which overhung the ditch.

It was now his turn to jump.

He was not quite so fortunate as the boys, and alighted in the centre of the ditch.

But without giving a glance at his muddy boots and trousers, he strode onward, keeping the boys well in view, yet remaining unseen himself.

The spot selected for the picnic was beside the river where Bob Fairfit and the Diddler had first seen Mr. Miffins in his new character as a man of property.

Here young Pickwick and his chums found most of their schoolfellows awaiting them.

They had not been there long when Joey Snorter made his appearance.

He was wheeling a barrow crowded with creature comforts.

"Why didn't you bring the chaise, stupid?" cried young Pickwick, "instead of wheeling the things along in a barrow this hot day?"

"Because," returned Joey Snorter, sitting down on the grass, and wiping the perspiration from his brow, "that there horse was too done up."

"You shouldn't have kept him out all night," observed young Pickwick, with a grin.

Joey Snorter made no reply.

After a few moments' rest, he was off again, wheeling the barrow before him.

"Let the jolly fellow alone," cried the Diddler, rolling over and over on the grass.

"Yes," said young Pickwick, throwing a stone in the water.

Before long they heard the melodious voice of Miffins, and the doctor and his friends came toward them, followed by the splashy Snorter.

The dismal page was still wheeling the barrow, and reclining comfortably upon it was the fat boy, asleep and snoring.

The provisions had been deposited on the grass.

Joey Snorter felt spiteful.

No wonder.

The day was hot, and Swags was as heavy as lead.

Wheeling the barrow quickly on one side, the dismal page coolly spilt the bloated youth upon the ground.

That interesting youth opened his eyes.

"What are you up to now?" he asked; "didn't the doctor tell you to mind what you were at?"

"I wasn't engaged to trundle you about, and so I tell you," said Joey Snorter.

"I say, Swags," said the Diddler, "are you going to let a chap like Snorter cheek you, old fellow?"

"No," returned the fat boy, promptly, "I ain't. Let him speak to me again and I'll show him what I am made of."

"I say, Joey," cried the Diddler, "mind your eye, old chap—the boy wants to fight you."

Joey Snorter gave a dismal grin.

"I'd like to see him do it," he remarked.

"You hear, Swags?" cried the Diddler.

He fitted his arm, and suddenly striking out, gave Joey Snorter a heavy blow on the chin.

"What's that for?" asked Joey Snorter, shedding tears.

"Would you very much like to know?" asked the fat boy, sleepily.

"Yes, I should," rejoined the injured Snorter.

"Then you won't," said the fat boy, flopping himself down in the wheelbarrow and closing his eyes.

The boys crowded round to see the fun.

"Ought I to stand this?" sobbed Joey Snorter, appealing to young Pickwick.

"Certainly not," returned Pickwick, winking at his friends.

"Then here goes," shrieked Snorter.

And he deliberately overturned the barrow.

The fat boy again rose to his feet.

"Take my advice, and mind how you put me out," he said.

"Who are you?" cried Joey Snorter.

The fat boy returned no answer beyond a stolid stare.

"Pitch into him, Swags!" cried some of the boys.

"Let him have it, Snorter!" cried the others.

"I'll support you, Swags," said the Diddler; "pound to do it—upon honor—off with your coat."

The fat boy slowly struggled out of his garment.

"If Snorter likes to apologize, I am open to accept it," he observed.

"Do anything of the kind," whispered young Pickwick; "I'll back you up."

"I don't apologize," cried Joey Snorter. "What are you going to do it I don't?"

"Hit you on the nose," cried the massive but dignified Swags.

"Tell him to come and do it," whispered young Pickwick.

"Come and do it!" said Snorter, little thinking that the fat boy would take him at his word.

To the astonishment of the spectators, Swags immediately went at Snorter.

The dismal youth managed to keep beyond the reach of his clumsy foe, and suddenly rushing in, caught Swags a violent blow upon the nose.

"Oh, it's all up with me," murmured Swags, as he fell to the ground.

"Well, what do you say to that?" cried Joey Snorter, hoping to be rewarded by young Pickwick's approving smile.

"The wrong nose has been hit," replied Swags; "I ought to have hit yours. "There's a mistake somewhere, and I don't like it."

The fat boy came lowering on.

"Come, Swags," he cried; "stand up like a man and try again."

The fat boy once more stood before Snorter.

He schoolfellows looked on with great interest.

"Now toe here, Swags," whispered the Diddler; "mind your eyes open, and hit him fair and square."

The fat boy nodded.

"I'll hide my time," he observed, trying to parry Snorter's attacks.

Joey Snorter was an arrant coward.

He tried to take advantage of the fat boy's condition, and drew near, intending to give him a knock-down blow.

Swags, if asleep, slumbered with one eye open.

As the too confident Snorter approached, he suddenly threw out his arm and struck that melancholy youth in the centre of the waistcoat.

"Oh, my poor inside," said Snorter, squatting upon the grass, and slowly rocking himself backward and forward.

Miffins, attracted by the noise, came up to see what was the cause of it.

"What's all this row about?" he asked, pushing his way through the crowd of boys standing round the victorious Swags.

"Nothing in particular," said young Pickwick.

"Then what are you all a-staring at?" asked Miffins, suspiciously. "There ain't much to look at in that there fat boy, when you've seen him afore."

"Never mind the fat boy," said young Pickwick. "I want you to do me a favor, Mr. Miffins."

"Come away, Picky," cried the Diddler, breaking in upon the conversation. "What's the use of talking to Miffins—he is no good to anybody—bad lot—sorry fellow—and so on."

"Just leave me alone," whispered young Pickwick. "It's a lark on."

"What are you a-whispering about?" asked the ever-suspicious Miffins. "If you're anything to say, speak out like a man."

"So I will, Miffins," said young Pickwick. "I want you to play some larks on the doctor."

"Why, you young varmint," began Miffins.

"Stop a bit," cried young Pickwick, with a smile. "You can make Waddle think that it is Parrot who is playing the jokes upon him."

"That alters the case," said Miffins, with a broad grin. "I'm with you, and have's my hand on it."

"Oh, we'll discuss—with that little formality," said young Pickwick, putting his hands behind his back.

"All right," returned Miffins, indifferently.

"Now look here, Miffins," said young Pickwick; "I'll just explain how I want you to go to work."

And the two boys walked along by the banks of the river, young Pickwick talking and Miffins listening with great attention.

"Bless," cried the Diddler, running after them. "Where are you all to? Dinner ready—fine spread, and no mistake."

Young Pickwick and Miffins were hungry, and gladly bent their steps in the direction of the knoll where the dinner was laid out.

(To be continued.)

"Young Pickwick's Schemings" was commenced in No. 468.

IN THE INTEREST OF SCIENCE.

CHAPTER I.

PROFESSOR KARLBERG.

EARLY one Monday morning there was seen to emerge from his by no means attractive abode a man whom every one whom he met turned to survey. Indifferent to all, Professor Karlberg walked on, sometimes changing his walk for a stride.

A strange-looking man was the professor. His long, dark hair, not unlike serpents in its shining coils, fell about his sallow neck, and eel-looks upon the brow were now and then blown into the hollow, ferverous eyes as nearly black as the human eye can be. The aquiline nose lent nothing suggestive of the German, though the man called himself "Karlberg;" nor were the thin lips characteristic of the land of posey and philosophy.

A brow vast, yet not suggestive of benevolence, overshadowed the intensity of the deep orbs, which rather darkened than lit the sombre, yellowish brown face. In figure the professor was tall, in gait awkward. An almost attenuated form seemed to suggest a nature lost in intellectual preoccupation rather than one tending to the sensualities of the table.

Why should one after another turn to look at this man as he passed? Is there, perchance, a subtle something that warns one human being against another?

Did some uncomprehended instinct say to one and all who passed him by:

"This man is at war with you. His soul is filled with purposes that, while science is their excuse, war with humanity. He would scorn beliefs holy and tender, and, worshiping the deity he has chosen, would wrong what human beings call nature."

As he strode on, sometimes swinging his long arms, a little Italian boy, who was carrying a marmot in a wicker cage, stopped a few paces ahead of him. The pretty child—a lad of some seven years—looked as though from exhaustion. Nothing in his appearance indicated hunger, or even extreme poverty. His humble garments were whole—his feet tolerably well shod.

Halting then, he put one hand to his side, then clasped the other over it, and as he leaned against the iron railing of a handsome house—orderly without as within—as are many stylish London residences—he murmured, in Italian:

"How terribly fast it beats!"

The halting, the gesture, the words—all these caught the attention of the gaunt professor. He also halted.

Going up to the lad and addressing him in such Italian as the peasantry about Rome are wont to speak, he demanded what ailed him.

Terrified at first—that subtle something—the lad at last replied that he had to stop at times—"his heart beat so fast."

"Have you been running?" demanded Karlberg.

Then, without further question, and while the lad added half a dozen shakings of the head to as many "Noes," he looked at him.

Why did not something whisper to little Giuseppino—called by his English familiars "Joey Peanut"—to fly?

There is danger, Giuseppino, danger. The eyes that are gazing with an implacable inquisitiveness into those great liquid wells, shaded by superb lashes, which light your beautiful and innocent face, are those of a foe! After this day there will be lying in wait.

Why, why, Giuseppino, did you stop just then—just there?

The searching eyes of the professor interrogated, and all unconsciously the face of the little Italian replied.

"Ah!" thought Karlberg, "here it is—the very form of heart-disease which has baffled me and so many others for all time. There are the blue shadows round the eyes; there is the transparent skin, the extreme delicacy of the nostrils, the pallid appearance of pain in the eyes. Pathetic! passing! Shall I turn idiot, too? I almost found myself thinking of the boy as a creature, and not as a case!"

To Giuseppino he said:

"Take time and. You see the number. Can you remember it? Yonder is the street. It is my office. I am a doctor;—come to me."

"When?" demanded the Italian lad.

"To-morrow."

"At what hour?"

"At—you had better come at night."

Giuseppino took the card.

Whether to go to the "doctor" or not was a question in his mind. He had never been to a doctor.

Karlberg, observing him, and doubtless reading his face—where was the human face that he had ever failed to read?—put his hand into his pocket, drew from it a coin, gave it to the lad, and said:

"I will give you more when you come to me;" and so saying, left him and strode on.

And now, Giuseppino, if you could, despite your invalid heart and its throbbings, if you could run—run on somewhere into the very heart of old London, to some spot where Karlberg could never see nor hear you, how good a thing it would be!

Giuseppino has a mother, a peasant in the Campagna, and a little sister, and when he left them with his uncle, who owned a huge bear and a diminutive monkey, and took his marmot under one arm and his guitar under the other to seek his fortune in London, they said:

"In a few years he will come back a tall youth, and, who knows, if the saints are kind, if he may not come with money in his pocket, and then we shall all live together and part no more."

Nobody thought sadly of his over-active heart; indeed, it was not till he reached a severer climate that it had troubled the lad over much.

He saunters along, showing his marmot and culling a harvest of pennies, but he does not resolve not to go to the "doctor's office."

CHAPTER II.

MATTIE MILLS, MILLINER.

MATTIE MILLS, milliner, lodged where the doctor did—that is to say, that her "rooms," as she chose to call them, were over the professor's office, and in them she displayed bonnets and caps, which, while they were doubtless suited to the surrounding inhabitants, would have made "Belgravians" recoil with a shriek of horror.

Now, Mattie Mills, milliner, distrusted the doctor. The "gashliness" of her which she probably meant ghastliness—of the man had much to do with this.

"Hit's hall very well ter talk how 'e knowin' so much, and curin' the 'art-disease. For my part H'd 'ev my 'art pulpertale ever so before H'd trust 'im, so H' would."

But, unobservant of the elevation of her by no means beautiful nose at sight of him, the professor would abstractedly gaze at the elderly spinster when he met her, continuing to tread the pathways of abstract science precisely as though he had not been under condemnation by the candid mind of Mattie Mills, milliner.

Little did he think, however, that at odd times, and absolutely without any motive than curiosity, Miss Mills was a spy upon him. She knew almost as much of his out-goings and in-comings as he did himself, and it was a great grief to her that James Leverick, who was engaged to be married to no less a person than her own niece—pretty Almira Sophia Betterwood—should be studying medicine with a man so "scrupicious" as the professor.

"No good won't come hof it—so there won't!" gave forth this oracle, and Almira would frequently give way to tears, and declare that Aunt Mattie was "awful hard on James."

Almira, be it observed, only semi-occasionally dropped an h, having been at a seminary, and had what her aunt called "hadvantages."

The hours at which James Leverick—who paid a goodly sum for the doctor's instructions—was allowed to present himself before him were fixed, and it was not customary for any one to call at the time when Professor Karlberg was supposed to be making chemical experiments.

Often would James wonder at this seclusion, and the absoluteness of the orders received, and, in his heart of heart, he mistrusted the professor, yet he could scarcely have told why.

The excessive cruelty of some of his experiments upon animals, and the utter heartlessness which he manifested as to the sufferings of the poor brutes, had awakened his deep disgust, and, but for the learning of Karlberg, James would have parted company with his preceptor long ere the time at which my story opens.

The evening came upon which Joseph Peanut made up his mind to visit the doctor. It was about seven o'clock and quite dark when he arrived at the office, and upon the doorsteps, going in, met Mattie Mills, who admitted him, pointed out the professor's door as she withdrew her latchkey, and, as the little Italian entered the office, muttered to herself:

"What kin that little furriner want, I should like to know?"

Joey Peanut looked about him. The office was a large, somber room, paneled with oak. Several huge chests stood against the wall. A great many boxes containing surgical instruments lay about, and reptiles preserved in spirits were placed here and there upon the broad shelves which garnished the wall.

A strong odor of mingled sandal-wood, ether, pepper, chloroform and laudanum filled the air, always impure, and a lively imagination easily evoked shadows of dead patients from the dark corners of the uninviting a place as could be found in any quarter reputed respectable.

The professor, who had admitted the lad, now began to question him.

With a dumbness which would have led to failure with a nature less ingenuous than that of Giuseppino, he unbuttoned to grim the lad's confidence.

He then placed his chest with surgical instruments of various kinds, gave him money and induced him to promise to return.

This was but one of many calls, till at last Karlberg had succeeded in making the visits, as he supposed, secret; for, although the lad late at night, himself opening the door, he did not suppose that Mattie Mills watched for and knew of the boy's coming. A British pimp must, it was afterward learned, have formed itself from the very outset in this dark mind.

Karlberg lived but with the thought of future wealth and fame, to be founded upon some great discovery in the specialty of heart-disease.

Giuseppino was the subject needed, and him Karlberg determined to make his victim. His aim will be comprehended in the words: "The necessity of ascertaining the case."

If there was any hesitation in Karlberg's mind, it was at the thought of a possible retribution and not compassion for the unfortunate lad.

He laid his plan thus: The boy came to him at eleven. Karlberg had given out that he would be out of town for a couple of days. He also gave out, unknown to James Leverick, that the student would have charge of his rooms for that time.

Karlberg so contrived that Leverick was seen to go in and out during that time one or twice.

When, at eleven, the little Italian appeared, and was stealthily admitted by the professor, he was left alone.

YOUNG PICKWICK'S SCHOOLDAYS.—"TAKING UP A WATER-JUG, HE EMPTIED THE CONTENTS OVER THE SLEEPER."—SEE PAGE 358.

Resting his guitar and his marmot—box and all—upon a table, Giuseppino leaned back in the huge office armchair, and reflected upon the probable amount which the "good doctor" would give him that night. He had always given him money. How much would it be this time?

Suddenly, and while he still lolled in the chair, a horrible sight offered itself to the little Italian's eyes.

A door had opened, and there was advancing toward him—upon him—the Demon of Death—a hideous skeleton, moving its eyeless head, its fleshless arms, its monstrous jaw, approached him.

With one appalling cry the boy extended his helpless arms and fell.

Karlberg had calculated well. Well had he studied his case. He had known that he needed not to shed the blood of the victim immolated "in the interest of science."

Moving the wires of the jointed skeleton, connected with an unseen battery, he had added the horror of that sight to the shadows of the already forbidding apartment.

Giuseppino *had seen*—that was enough. The lad was dead, dead—sinless for ever!

Had the cry which but one ear noted—it was that of Mattie Mills—attracted other notice, and brought frightened questioners to the office, they would have found Karlberg doing, apparently, everything in his power to revive an unfortunate lad afflicted with heart-disease, who had been terrified at the unexpected sight of a skeleton.

Now, all precedent allows the presence of an anatomical study in a physician's office. The explanation would probably have sufficed, and—the dead body of the boy would still have been at the disposal of this devotee of science.

No one came.

Mattie Mills had heard and noted the cry. She had seen, by secretly watching, the Italian lad admitted. But to enter the office, to board in his very den this mysterious man, that Mattie, although she ached to do it, did not dare to do.

To conceal the body was the next urgent matter. Karlberg, after wrapping it in a cloak, laid the corpse in one of the huge chests which stood against the paneling. The faithful marmot, meantime, frightened at its master's cry, was rushing about its narrow box. Karlberg removed it, wrung its neck, tossed it into the chest, laid beside it the guitar and closed the lid.

The short and pathetic life-history of Josey Peanut was written, and London would never again see the pretty marmot at its clever tricks. Never again would the guitar give to the ear of its street comrades the plaintive Roman airs, nor the Barcarol of Venice, fit symbols both of its innocence and its tragic fate.

Next day there appeared in the *Times* this paragraph:

"MYSTERIOUS DISAPPEARANCE OF A LITTLE ITALIAN BOY.—Giuseppino Gaddi, the nephew of one Beppo Gaddi, an exhibitor of trained animals, a lad familiarly known as "Josey Peanut," the marmot-boy, has vanished from his accustomed haunts. The lad, it appears, was a *protégé* of the celebrated singer, Signora Maida Montalda, who is determined to do her utmost to solve the mystery of his disappearance. The police are taking measures to aid the benevolent and beautiful singer. A reward of a hundred pounds is offered for any information on the matter."

This announcement, on the third day of the absence of Giuseppino, was read by Professor Karlberg, the signora, James Leverick, Almira Sophia, and last, but not least, Mattie Mills, the milliner.

CHAPTER III.

A PRIMA DONNA.

NOW, Giuseppino had a friend. His friend was none other than the beautiful, the successful, the "superb" Madame Maida Montalda, the "great" singer.

To her was Giuseppino wont to repair every Sunday when she was singing in London, and it was due to her *largesse* that the lad was always neatly clad.

Owing a debt of gratitude to his peasant mother, who had nursed her faithfully through a dangerous attack of Roman fever, the signora had always purposed putting the lad to school, and had always kept her eye upon him.

It was the lad's own wish to be a street Arab, and he objected to going to school, so that this opposition and the conviction that heart-disease would end his life at an early age had made the signora pause and turned away the benedecent currents of her purpose for the time being.

But what was the surprise of "the Montalda" to receive one morning the visit of Giuseppino's uncle, Beppo, unaccompanied, let me say, by his bear and monkey, and with an anxious brow. He would, he said, respectfully represent to the bellissima signora that his little nephew had disappeared. Would the signora kindly advise him?

IN THE INTEREST OF SCIENCE.—"A DOOR HAD OPENED, AND THERE WAS ADVANCING TOWARD HIM—UPON HIM—THE DEMON OF DEATH!"—SEE PAGE 359.

CHAPTER IV.

ACCUSED.

IN the meantime, and with a *sang-froid* as perfect as that with which he had wrung the neck of the marmot, Karlberg had completed the horror of his deed by anatomizing his victim, searching the poor dead heart for the awful secret its Creator had hidden, finding it, and, undisturbed by fear or conscience, making the wonderful drawings which first revealed his so dear-bought discovery to science.

None now know that Franz Karlberg was the first to tell of the dread secret for which he had given his soul's health.

Another and far less skillful man of science has the credit of having to the world's eye the subtle workings of the peculiar form of heart-disease which made the lad's so singular a case; and to him are attributed also Karlberg's astonishingly profound troubles upon the subject.

Karlberg, to avoid discovery while anatomizing the body, had closed his doors, and was supposed to be absent.

Before the murder he had contrived to have James Leverick visit the office, it will be remembered. Now it appeared to be closed and unmarketed.

To still further avert notice, Karlberg did not make coffee as he was in the habit of doing, but lived on potted meats with which he had provided himself previous to his crime.

To dispose of the body of his victim became the next preoccupation of this man, and of this he was his mind, so carefully laid in its minor points—but in those only—his plan of action, that it would be difficult to say whether Karlberg might not have succeeded in removing the mutilated corpse and concealing it, had he made more haste.

But upon that hint contained in the *Times* paragraph, Mattie Mills, milliner, spoke. She discovered the abode of La Montalda, interviewed her, told of the mysterious visits of a boy, "answering to the description given," to the—to her—abhorrent professor; detailed the arrival of the lad, marmot and guitar-laden, at the office at an hour so strangely late; dwelt upon the "cording" of her blood, as she saw fit to phrase it, at the "beejum" shriek; went through all of this a second time to Beppo, who did not speak English, but understood pantomime; repeated it for the third time to a lawyer called in by the signora, and—for Mattie Mills, milliner, was "of the earth, earthy"—demanded the reward.

Indeed, it was not until the lawyer remarked that "proof, and not assertion" was what they wanted, also "that the thing must be looked into before she could claim the money," that she elected to await that all-important issue.

In less than an hour after, Franz Karlberg was in the hands of the police. To search the office, to find the desecrated corpse, "unmannerly breeched with gore," the dead marmot, the shattered guitar—all this was but the work of an hour more, during which the perfect calmness—indeed, indifference—of this singular man was such that those who had arrested him began to believe him to be the victim of some foul conspiracy.

All London rang with the trial. The heartlessness of the crime, the helpless innocence of the victim, the persistence of Karlberg in maintaining that he had been absent at the time of the disappearance of the lad, the attempt by him made to make James Leverick appear the criminal, the humorous features of Mattie Mills's evidence, in which her persistent watching of the professor was made clear; her constant reference to her objection to "Haimra Sophia's" marriage with Leverick so long as he should continue to study with that "incarnick feend," as she declared the professor to have always been in her estimation; the appearance of the beautiful Montalda upon the witness stand; the discovery of the drawings made from the dissected heart of Giuseppino; the pathos of the translated letters from the poor peasant mother and sister; the eloquence of Mr. Julius Bertin, the signora's lawyer; the interest felt by the medical faculty in the undeniably learned, if undeniably mysterious and, as Matty Mills declared, "unaccountable" professor—all this stirred up public interest to the pitch of intensity, and made much more than a nine days' wonder of the story of the poor marmot boy.

But the harpies claimed their prey; the Feast of Guilt must be eaten.

Remorse never laid hold upon the heart of Franz Karlberg, though baffled ambition, shattered pride, consciousness of degradation and shame, and all centred upon his physical strength to such a degree that he looked like the phantom of his former

self. The never well-fleshed frame became skeleton-like; the great eyes glared from their sockets.

A naturally vigorous constitution fought hard with death, as if to save this guilty man for the scaffold.

It was predicted that he would die before he could be executed. There were those who suggested that Karlberg would take his own life. He, people said, must know too many of the secret openings of the gate of life not to use one in his extreme need.

It is almost needless to say that Franz Karlberg was found guilty and sentenced. It was supposed that he had administered chloroform to the lad.

The story of the blood-curdling shriek seemed to dispute this theory; but certain it was that the lad had entered alive and in apparent health the apartment where his body was found, and that to no other than the doctor's hand could the crime be traced.

On the Monday after his sentence, Karlberg demanded pen and ink, and began to write. In a confession so ably written, as eloquent as the man's prior fame would have led its readers to expect, he detailed how he had frightened the little Italian to death, his motive for so doing, his making the drawings, his writing the treatise, and how he had planned his defense.

The curious document was finished at a late hour at night. It was addressed to Signora Montaldi, and accompanied by another document, desiring that all his instruments might be sold, as well as his books and furniture, that the proceeds should be added to certain moneys that would be found in his safe, and the whole be sent to the mother of Giuseppino.

After writing all this, in which there was no word of repentance, and many ramblings into the field of science, Karlberg laid down upon the pallet in his cell. In the morning the jailer found a corpse where a living man had lain. Those were the days of cravats, and Karlberg had removed the spring from his, and forced it down his throat, thus strangling himself.

In his hand was a clinched paper, upon which was written:

"At the moment of dying I maintain that the life of an Italian peasant boy was but a puny sacrifice to the greatness of science. What I have done I would do *if it might be secret*. I leave the world the secret of those morbid valves and their overaction, a great step in the interest of medical science, and I trust that posterity will judge me fairly and understand all of my motives."

GIANT NO-EYES.—"'PUT OUT HIS EYES,' SAID THE DWARF, RAISING HIS VOICE; 'MAKE HIM BLIND, THEN HE WILL BE HELPLESS IN YOUR HANDS, AND YOUR SLAVE.' THE OLD GIANT'S EYES GLISTENED WITH FEROCIOUS JOY."

GIANT NO-EYES.

CHAPTER I.

THE DWARF CHAMPION.

AS though they were bolts hurled from the angry heaven, down came the stones!

Not of a small size such as might fall on a house-roof and do no great damage, but huge boulders, large as a man's head, that made holes in the walls and roofs they struck, and doomed to instant death man or beast against whom they were directed.

The scene was a remote spot of Southern Germany, and the exact spot the extensive village of Growlhangrum, which lay at the base of the Spitzspitz Mountains.

Indeed, for several hundred yards up the mountain-side the soil was like a sheet of gold with the ripened wheat crops, fully ready to cut and spoiling for want of reaping.

But who would venture out to reap, to make himself a target for the malicious stone-throwers, and perhaps fall into their hands to meet certain death, and who could say how much torture beforehand!

No one could speak as to this last matter, for though in the memory of those who had lived in the fruitful valley, scores, some said hundreds, had been stolen away, and hurried to the grim gray tower, hidden from common eyes in the mists and fogs of Winter, but plainly to be seen from below in clear weather, though scores or hundreds of men and women had been snatched away and hurried to this dreadful retreat, not one had ever returned to relate its mysteries.

All that was known to the unfortunate inhabitants of Growlhangrum was that the said gray stone tower was inhabited by two giants, judged to be father and son, from the fact of the grizzled locks that grew on the enormous head of one of them being quite white, each standing at least twelve feet in height, and so tremendously strong that, though the mountain paths were steep, it was no great inconvenience for either of the monsters to take one in each hand, by the hind legs or by the nape of the neck, a couple of half-grown cows, and walk off as though such a load were a mere nothing, while as for sacks of corn, one of which an ordinary man would stagger under, the way with them was to take half a dozen, three beneath each arm, with the greatest unconcern.

To their great sorrow and distress this was a spectacle that the good people of Growlhangrum were but too frequently permitted to witness.

For more years than could be remembered the two giants in question had been at once the curse and terror of the poor people of the neighborhood, and, doubtless, they would long ago have fled and left the rapacious monsters to provide for themselves, only that the soil thereabouts was singularly rich, and the crops of corn and grapes it yielded so delicious and abundant that with a little luck cultivation was sure to realize a fortune in a very few years.

The two giants of the mountains were, however, the great drawbacks.

Had they chosen to work for themselves the enormous fellows with their vast strength could have supported themselves with ease; but they did not care to work.

It was their tyrannous will that those who dwelt at the foot of their mountain should labor for them and supply all their wants, or woe betide them.

They did not deign to hold direct communication with their benefactors. It had somehow come to be understood that the goods they required should be carried up the mountain to a certain point, and there left, and during the night the giants themselves came down and carried the things up to their solitary home.

They were not to be satisfied with coarse fare.

If the kine were lean, or the wine poor in quality, or fell short of the usual quantity, then down came a stone shower, and the villagers knew that they had given offense.

It was so at the time when this story opens.

There had been much rain and heavy floods, and the water had got into the corn store and spoilt a vast quantity of it, and affecting it all somewhat, and it was this the two greedy giants were grumbling about.

The villagers had half expected to get into trouble about the musty corn, and on the day after the delivery, had shut themselves in their houses, or hidden in caves and out-of-the-way places, where the cruel missiles could not well reach them.

The rapacious monsters had never been known so furious.

It was now many days and weeks since they had begun to hurl stones, and they had not yet ceased. The streets and the ruined house-tops were piled with them, and business was altogether at a standstill.

"And yet, if we had only the courage of men and combined together," said Zimmel Swartz, as another stone came crashing through the roof of the market-place, where a score or so of the villagers were taking shelter—"if we had but the courage of men we might turn on our tyrants and slay them, or drive them away."

It was no time for laughter, yet the peal which greeted this speech might have been heard by the enraged giants themselves, high up as was their gray stone stronghold.

And no wonder, for Zimmel Swartz, though of an age to have a beard, was one of the smallest dwarfs that was ever seen.

Since the age of four years his height had not increased, by a nail's breath, nor had his bulk anything to speak of.

But Zimmel had brains in his big head, and in point of cunning and courage as well, was more than a match for any one of his neighbors.

When the roar of laughter which greeted the little man's speech had subsided one of the villagers remarked:

"Why let any one share the glory with you, Zimmel? Why not set out, my knee-high bravo, and attack them both, single-handed?" There was another laugh at this, but the face of the dwarf was quite serious.

"Yes," he remarked, "I have thought of that myself, neighbors. It will be better, of course, to risk one life instead of many, and avoid bloodshed. I've been thinking a great deal lately about attacking them single-handed, and I've half a mind to try it."

Another great roar of laughter set in, but was cut short by a tremendously large stone, big almost as Zimmel Swartz himself, which came right

THE MYSTIC THREE.—"MR. STAGGERS WAS LUGGED, BODY, BONES AND PANTALOONS, OUT OF THE CAMP. AND FORWARD TO THE STYE, WHERE HALF A DOZEN PIGS WERE WAITING TO BE CONVERTED INTO PORK."—SEE PAGE 362.

through the roof and hurt one man badly. "It isn't safe to stay here," said the dwarf, quite coolly. "Let us come down into the cellar and we will talk over this plan of mine."

They went down into the cellar, and there Zimmel Swartz revealed to their astounded ears his scheme, or, rather, as much as he chose to tell of it.

It was simply this:

That an effort should be made with all speed to appease the wrath of the offended giants.

That an offering should be made to them of a dozen sucking pigs, of which they were particularly fond, with six sacks of the finest flour and twenty skins of the choicest wine.

"And they'll eat the meat," remarked one graybeard of the party, "and they'll drink up the wine and make themselves drunk with it, and then who can tell what may happen to us all? Oh, no, Little Zimmel, that plan won't do at all; we don't want the monsters roaring and raving amongst us down here."

"But they would not be permitted to come down here," said the dwarf, quietly.

"Indeed! and who would prevent them, pray?"

"I would," replied Zimmel Swartz.

They opened their mouths for another guffaw at the dwarf's expense, but the latter stamped his little foot in fury, and there was a flashing in his eyes that told them how much in earnest he was.

"Accept or reject my proposal," he exclaimed, angrily, "but don't laugh at me. I said I would prevent them coming down the mountain and I meant it."

"But you won't be there, Little Zimmel."

"Where?"

"Up yonder; up where they live. Bah! Is it a matter to joke about? Is there one amongst the biggest of us who would wish a journey up there?"

There was no reply to this, and then the dwarf, with his little arms folded and in a tone of scornful triumph, remarked:

"Then I will be your champion! Let me go. Take the things I suggest up the mountain, and take as well six bushels of dried pears, and I will get into one of the baskets, with the fruit just covering me, and I shall be able to get into their gray stone tower, and——but I shall say no more. What more remains to be done rests with me, and for the sake of our mothers, for the sake of our maidens and our helpless little children, Zimmel Swartz will do or die!"

And drawing from its sheath his tiny dirk the dwarf, as he uttered these last words, raised it aloft and then with his head bowed, solemnly kissed it, on which the company, strangely awed by his words and manner, bowed their heads and muttered, "Amen!"

CHAPTER II.

ZIMMEL SWARTZ SETS OUT SINGLE-HANDED AGAINST THE TWO GIANTS.

THEY tied a sheet to a long pole and held it aloft as a flag of truce, but it was not until the long procession set out, carrying the twenty skins of wine, and the six bushels of dried pears, and the other things, that the two giants desisted from hurling down great stones.

It was nearly evening when they reached the usual place up the mountain-side to set down their loads, and whispering a tender good-by to Zimmel Swartz in the pear-basket, hurried homeward again.

Barely was it dark than the dwarf could feel by the vibration of the ground that the giants were approaching.

"I shall hear their voices presently," he said to himself. He was very anxious to do that, because no one in the valley had ever heard the giants speak, and it was uncertain what language they talked. "If it should be one I don't understand, I am as good as dead at starting."

But his mind was soon set at ease.

He presently heard a laugh that was like the bellowing of a bull, and a voice to match remarked:

"Ho, ho! the rascals have come to their senses at last; here is something like a peace offering, my son. Ha, ha! wines of the best and richest, I can tell by the bouse, and little pigs, too!"

"And here are pears, too, and best white flour, my father," exclaimed a voice even more terrible than the first. "Ho, ho! up with them, and we will have a feast to-night."

"Ah!" continued the youngest monster, clapping his nose so close to the basket in which the dwarf was confined, that he could have stuck his dirk into it. "It sets my mouth watering to smell at 'em."

There was too much of a load to be carried up in one journey, so the younger giant took the six bushels of pears and a couple of sacks of flour, and the other burdened himself with half a dozen skins of wine and the sucking-pigs, and up they went.

When they reached the gray stone tower the younger giant kicked open the great gate and in they went, through several passages and into a great kitchen, where through the chinks of the basket the dwarf could see a great fire was burning.

Here arrived, they set their loads down on the floor, and only waiting long enough to run a mighty spit through the ten sucking pigs and see them roasting, and to broach one of the skins of wine and refresh themselves with a gallon or so of its ruby contents, and then they set off again for the remainder of their goods.

So soon as they were gone, the dwarf cut the string that tied the cover of his basket, and jumped out and made the best use of his time to examine the place a little.

Besides the great kitchen there were two other immense chambers, in one of which were two great heaps of dried grass, showing that the giants slept there, and in the other quite a heap of all manner of articles of prodigious proportions—vases and basins and quaint dishes and platters, besides innumerable ornaments of a size fit only for giants to wear, and all of solid gold, some of the latter being set with precious stones that twinkled in the dim light the great kitchen-fire cast on them.

So spell-bound was Zimmel Swartz at sight of such enormous riches that he stood looking at the heap until he was reminded of the return of the giants by hearing their voices in merry conversation.

He did not, however, return to the pear-basket, but spying a hole in the rafters of the roof close by the rough stone-wall, he made a shift to scramble up the table, and so concealed himself.

The giants came in, and now that the dwarf from his high perch had a fair opportunity of contemplating them, he would have given something considerable for a drink of wine to keep his courage from shrinking.

Not only were they such awfully stalwart and powerful fellows, but they were so hideously ugly, and when they laughed their mouths opened like spiky caves.

They kept no servants, and waited on themselves. They made ready for supper.

The giant with the white hair, but whose teeth were as large and as white as the other one's, by way of trying if the pigs were roasted enough, stooped down and bit a huge mouthful out of one, pronouncing them well cooked, unhooked the spit and flung it on to the table, and with a pointed stake for a fork and a chopper for a knife they sat down to the feast.

They ate ravenously, and they drank as though they were pouring the wine into a gulf that was bottomless, and then the younger giant said:

"Let us have some pears."

He went straight to the basket in which the dwarf had been crouched, and which, of course, instead of being full of fruit was well-nigh empty.

He had been drinking so much that his face was flushed, and his legs a little unsteady, and he turned savagely on his father.

"You couldn't wait, then!" he roared. "It isn't enough to share fairly with me, but you must filch slyly and cheat me! Bah! I hate greediness!"

The old giant, of course, indignantly denied eating the pears, and from high words they got to such terrible blows that the dwarf, peeping down from his hole in the roof, thought to be sure that one or the other would presently be killed.

But they left off when they were out of breath, and presently shook hands and took to drinking again.

The young giant drank deepest, and it was not very long ere, with a yawn that shook the rafters, he rose from the table and staggered to the next chamber, where the beds of dried grass were spread.

But the old giant kept his seat, and had some more wine.

Presently a noise like distant thunder announced that his son was snoring, and then the old giant began to give vent to the pent-up anger that was vexing him.

"To be beat and abused by him!" muttered the old giant, glaring toward the chamber and shaking his prodigious fists. "To be falsely accused on purpose that he might fall on and beat me because he is the younger and stronger! Ah, if I dare take revenge on him. But it was in my power to bring him low and make him my slave. But he is stronger than I am, and alone I dare not venture it."

"I will help you."

As already stated, the old giant had been drinking heavily, but hearing the shrill, little piping voice on the roof, he leapt up in terror from the table and gazed vacantly about him, but with such a diabolical expression on his face that the dwarf half repented of the rash step he had taken.

However, he had committed himself now, and it was too late to be sorry.

"Who—was it the wind?" hoarsely whispered the white-haired giant, "or was it a beetle in a chink of the wall. It sounded like a voice, but that it could not have been. No, no, it could not have been a voice from up there. I must have dozed to sleep and dreamt it."

And as though to wake himself up the giant raised the enormous flagon to his lips, and was about to take a long pull at it, when the little voice cried out again, "I will help you!" and wine and measure fell with a crash to the ground.

The old giant was terribly startled, and seized an enormous club that leaned against the wall, as he gasped out:

"Who spoke?"

"One who is now looking at thee," returned Zimmel Swartz, coolly. "One who, when he said he would help you, meant what he said."

"As to what?" asked the old giant, in terrified accents, as he continued to gaze about him bewilderedly to find out where the tiny voice came from.

"In gaining your wish—the wish you just now uttered. That your son might be brought low, and become your slave."

The old giant started, and the expression of his face immediately altered.

"Hush!" he exclaimed, in a whisper that was as loud as the shouting of an ordinary mortal, "you will wake him"—and he pointed to where his son was snoring. "Whoever you are, witch or evil spirit, if you can help me I will pay you well, for I hate him—I hate him."

"You have cause," replied the dwarf, who was still invisible. "I know his thoughts. He will wait until you grow a little older and weaker, and then he will kill you and take for himself all the golden things that are in the other chamber."

The old giant could no longer have any doubt that it was a supernatural being that was addressing him, for how could he know anything about the hoard of gold that no eye but that of the giants had ever rested on?

"Listen, whoever thou art!" said the old giant, trembling with rage, for the dwarf had just hit what was always firm in the white-haired old monster's mind, when he spoke of the younger giant killing him when he grew too old to resist. "Bring him here and make him my slave, or teach me how to do it, and the riches I have shall be half thine own. But let me see thee if thou art in bodily shape."

It was a hazardous thing to do, but Zimmel Swartz saw that if he would serve in the bold enterprise, he must inspire the giant with all the awe and wonder he could, so when the giant said "Let me see thee," he dropped out of the chink on the roof just down on the table, and from thence nimbly turning a somersault, alighted on the ground, and stood with his head reaching as high as the old giant's knees, making a polite bow.

"I am here," said Zimmel Swartz.

The giant had never seen a dwarf before, and nothing could exceed his dumb-stricken amazement as he stared downward.

"Stand me on the table," said Zimmel Swartz, fearlessly; "it will be more convenient for talking."

With his big eyes goggling half out of his head, the giant took up the dwarf by the nape of the neck as one lifts a kitten, and stood him on the table.

"Is it possible that a dwarf like this can help me?" he presently muttered, incredulously. "Why, I could kill him with a flick of my thumb-nail."

"But it is not everybody you could kill so easily," remarked the dwarf, calmly, as he nodded toward the chamber where the snorer was lying.

The giant's eyes lightened.

"Can't you help me to kill him?" he whispered, savagely.

"I can't do that and keep my word to you as well," replied Zimmel Swartz. "I said I would help you to bring him low and make him your slave. Of what use would he be to you were he dead?"

The old giant pondered these words of wisdom for a few seconds ere he replied:

"If he were dead, he couldn't kill me, at all events."

"But," said Zimmel, "I can tell you how to keep him alive, and yet he shall be as harmless as though he were dead. Harmless and quite at your mercy, so that you can starve him, beat him, do anything to him if he dares to disobey you."

The old giant grinned, so that he showed all his back teeth in a way hideous to behold, and rubbed his hand in fiendish glee.

"Ay, indeed! that is as I should desire!" he presently added, "but how, how is it to be done, mite? Tell me that."

The dwarf tiptoed, and bringing his mouth to a level with the giant's ear softly whispered something.

"What?" exclaimed the old giant, with a sudden start; "speak a little louder."

"Put out his eyes," said the dwarf, raising his voice; "make him blind, then he will be helpless in your hands and your slave."

The old giant's eyes glistened with ferocious joy.

"Ha! to think I should never have thought of that!" he exclaimed, in admiration. "It shall be done, mite, it shall be done. But when—how?"

"No time like the present," replied the dwarf. "He is drunk with wine now, and cannot well resist. As to the means, there are twenty ways steppers eyes may be put out."

The old giant crept softly into the chamber where the younger giant was lying, and presently returned, and breaking a fresh wineskin, filled the flagon that had dropped from his hands in his flight when he heard the voice of the dwarf in the cellar, and raising it to his lips in both his hands, drained it dry.

Then he took the spit on which the ten sucking pigs had been roasted, and thrust the sharp end into the fire.

What happened after that the dwarf did not know.

All that he knew was that there presently arose such an appalling uproar, such a blood-chilling blending of piteous moans, that he was fain to clamber up the wall and hide again in the roof, to be out of harm's way.

It was as well that he did, for he had barely reached his retreat when, roaring like a wounded lion, and covering his face with his hands, the younger giant came blundering and stumbling out of his den, swinging his arms and yelling for vengeance on the cruel monster who had robbed him of his eyes.

As for the wicked old giant, he discreetly kept out of the way, and did not make an appearance until the next day, by which time the terrible pain of the blind giant had somewhat subsided, and being quite exhausted by the tremendous falls he had received in groping his way in the dark, had fallen asleep.

When this happened the vindictive old giant crept in with a strong rope in his hand, and stealthily passing it under the arms and legs of his blind son, made his limbs as fast as possible with tight knots.

Then, with a brutal kick, he woke him up and bade him make sport for him while he drank.

He was armed with the dreadful spit, which, however, was cold now, and when the wretched blind giant in dreadful language declined to obey, the malicious monster poked at him with his sharp spit and made him bleed until the blind giant howled for mercy, and at last consented to sing the songs the other ordered him to while he eat, using his prostrate body as a footstool, and swigging down enormous draughts of wine.

Throughout the whole scene, Zimmel Swartz, the dwarf, remained in his hiding-place in the roof, peeping down and closely watching how matters progressed.

Seemingly the cruel old giant had forgotten all about him and his promise to share with him all his wealth.

But he had got his desire, and his only thought was to savagely enjoy it, and with his feet on his blind giant son, kept on drinking and drinking.

At last he grew too intoxicated to raise the flagon to his mouth, and first seeing to the fastenings of the blind giant to make sure he could not break away from them, he left him where he was, and staggered away to the sleeping chamber and was soon fast asleep.

"So far so good!" muttered the dwarf, rubbing his tiny hands with delight; "now for the next move!"

The next move was to slip quietly down from his perch and to approach the miserable blind giant, who was writhing and groaning in pain and rage.

The dwarf laid his little hand on the giant's cheek, and he instantly left off writhing and groaning, and asked, in a tone of strange dismay:

"What's that?"

"A friend," replied the dwarf, speaking right into his ear, that he might not misunderstand his words; "one who can help you to revenge."

"Are—are you one of the pygmies from the village?" said the blind giant, quite astounded.

"I am smaller than any pygmy you ever saw," returned Zimmel Swartz, "yet I am big enough to give thee power over your enemy who has served you so cruelly."

The blind giant almost howled again in the frenzy of rage the dwarf's remaining words occasioned him.

"Ah! that I had him in my grasp!" he cried, with a shiver. "Oh, that I had my liberty, and could lay a hand, only one hand, on him!"

"What would you do then?" the dwarf asked.

"I would kill him," was the reply, delivered from between teeth set fast in bitterest hatred. "I would not leave so much life in him as there is in a fly!"

"What if I help you to your desire?" asked the cunning dwarf.

"Why, after that you may kill me and welcome," returned the blind giant, "if it is your will. Only give me my liberty and lead me to him and you shall see."

There were both the choppers the giants had used at supper on the table, and with one of these the dwarf severed the great ropes with which the blind giant was tied.

Then placing the weapon in his hand, he led him to the entrance where the old giant was locked in the arms of sleep.

Then, afraid to wait a moment longer, he flew as fast as his little legs would carry him out of the gray-stone tower and on to the mountain.

It was now daylight, and he expected every moment to hear the terrible sounds of the most ferocious combat.

None such reached his ears, however, though he listened with the greatest eagerness.

But there was no combat.

Just as the old giant lay asleep and snoring the blind giant fell on and slew him, and before noon the dwarf, who was on the watch, saw the latter dragging out the great carcass by its heels, feeling his way to a deep ravine, into which he cast it.

"Very good, indeed!" said Zimmel Swartz, chuckling to himself; "now for the next move."

But for that he had to wait some little time, but he at once set about making preparations for it.

He slipped back into the tower while the blind giant was lingering outside, and dragged away and concealed all that there was to eat and drink, leaving not so much as a bar of flour or a single skin of wine, or even a few of the dried pears, and then, having himself eaten and drunk, he mounted to his perch in the ceiling again, to see what would happen.

It was just as he thought it would be.

In a short time the blind giant grew hungry and thirsty, and went stumbling about the place in search of drink and food.

But there was none to be found, and after a few savage growls he stumbled to bed.

But he was astir before it was daylight next morning.

Long fasting had made him wakeful, and the dwarf saw him on his hands and knees searching about diligently for something to eat.

Finding nothing, he grew furious, and groping his way outside to where an enormous quantity of great stones stood ready piled, he commenced to hurl them down on to the houses in the village.

Being unable to see or take aim, however, he did very little damage.

So passed that day, and almost famished with hunger, next day the blind giant seemed resolved to make his way down to the village; but at every few steps he took he blundered and fell, and bruised himself so terribly, that after a few attempts he gave up in despair, and somehow stumbled back to the tower again.

Yet another day the dwarf left him by himself, and then, when he had grown very weak for want of food, he ventured down from his perch, and climbed to the table at which the miserable wretch was sitting.

"Listen," said the dwarf: "I have already done you one good turn; shall I do you another?"

The blind giant, recognizing the voice in an instant, replied, dejectedly:

"Food! food! I want nothing but food! Give me that, and I will be your slave for ever."

"On one condition I will do what you ask," replied the dwarf, "and that is that you give me all the store of golden vessels that is in the other chamber."

The famished giant shook his head impatiently.

"What are they to me since I can't eat them?" he made answer. "Take them; thou has given me my revenge, and they are thy due. Now give me some food."

"You must go with me down to the village for that," replied the dwarf.

But the blind giant shook his head at this.

"No, no," he replied, timidly; "now that I am helpless they will remember the wrong that my wicked old father and myself have done them, and they will make me pay for all."

And it was a long time before the dwarf could persuade him to the contrary.

"Trust yourself to me," said Zimmel Swartz, "and you shall be provided with all the food you can eat, not only now, but in all future time; but you will have to work for it. Do you promise?"

"I promise," returned the blind and helpless wretch, resignedly.

Hearing this the dwarf lost no time in getting together all the great golden vessels that lay in a heap in the adjoining chamber, tying them together by the necks and handles in a great bunch that was nearly as big round as a tun, and slung it over the blind giant's shoulder.

"Now," said the dwarf, "let me bestride your neck, and I can keep a good look-out ahead and guide your steps as we descend the mountain to the village."

And in this way they did descend, and who shall describe the wonder, the admiration, the delirious delight of the whole village of Growlhangrum at the astounding spectacle? Who can portray the breathless interest with which they listened to the marvelous story that Zimmel Swartz had to tell?

They did him all the honor in their power.

Dwarf as he was, he was proclaimed from that moment ruler of the village, and the villagers were ever afterward his happy and contented subjects, and prospered amazingly.

As for the blind giant, the dwarf ruler kept his word to him, nor did he have cause to repent it, for a more willing and devoted slave master never had.

THE MYSTIC THREE.

SHOWING WHAT HAPPENED TO THREE BOYS WHO BELIEVED ALL THEY READ.

By PIERCE CUTTING.

CHAPTER LXXVI.

A MIRACULOUS RECOVERY.

THE stoppage of the train and the shout awoke the drowsers, who started up and shook themselves.

"So we're there at last," observed the one whom the Mystic Three regarded as their employer, and whose name was Hiram Boggles.

"Not yet, I should say," remarked another.

"Nor me, neither," said a third. "If it's only to git that loonatic off 'n our hands."

At this observation Gideon Goble uttered a piteous groan.

"Poor fellow," said Hiram Boggles, "he'll be out of his troubles afore long! There's only one thing I'm sorry for."

"What's that?"

"Why, they say this 'sylum here's a terrible rough place."

"Wasn't it there they starved that man?"

"Yes; and strait-jacketed the woman to death, too."

"And fixed that boy, don't you recollect?"

"Let's see. Broke his back, wasn't it?"

"No, crippled him."

"Oh, yes; I remember now."

Gideon Goble grew rigid with horror.

He already felt himself undergoing the tortures described.

As for his companions, they were in almost equal misery.

Now that they had got him into this scrape, it behooved them to extricate him.

But how?

They dared not avow the trick they had played. For, even if the drovers believed them, which was unlikely, they would view the full measure of their wrath on them for making game of them.

Suddenly Sim leaped at an idea.

Hiram Boggles had just commanded one of the others to go for a policeman to take charge of the maniac, when Sim said:

"Hold on!"

"What for?" queried Hiram.

"You don't suppose we'll let you do that, do you?"

"Do what?"

"Why, have him arrested."

"We ain't going to have him arrested."

"What do you want a policeman for, then?"

"Why, me to take him to the lock-up."

"And don't you call that arresting him?"

"It's only till they can send him to the 'sylum."

"Well, it won't work, anyway."

"Why won't it?"

"Because we won't have the poor fellow abused."

"What are you going to do, then?"

"Take him to the asylum ourselves."

"All right. It ain't far, so I'll go along."

"Great snakes!" whispered Gid, as his friends untied his legs, to permit him to walk; "ain't you got any hearts?"

"Of course we have."

"Then why don't you get me out of this?"

"Ain't we trying to?"

"To take me to a lunatic asylum, you mean."

"Not at all."

"What then?"

"Listen."

"I'm listening."

"The first chance you get, fall down."

"Do what?"

"Fall down."

"That won't be hard to do."

"Why?"

"Because I can scarcely stand now."

"Well, when you fall, fall real hard."

"Sakes alive! ain't I sore enough already?"

"And be sure to hit your head."

"Oh, yes."

"If you can make it bleed, all the better."

"Why don't you tell me to dash my brains out?"

"For an excellent reason."

"What?"

"People who do that have to have the brains to dash."

Before Gid could reply Hiram Boggles called:

"Well, sir you chaps ready yet?"

"All right," responded Sim.

"Then let's hoist it."

And the speaker left the car.

At almost the first step, accident saved Gideon Gobie the trouble of carrying out the programme arranged for him by Sim.

As he was about to step to the platform, the train suddenly backed.

Gid, rendered stiff and unsteady by his late severe confinement, lost his footing and tumbled head first on the platform.

The fall stunned him.

And likewise inflicted an ugly cut on his forehead.

His friends sprang to his side with an exclamation of alarm.

Finding him unconscious, they, assisted by the drovers, carried him to a drug-store opposite the depot.

The druggist, who was also a physician, soon revived him.

"There," he said, plastering up the cut, "you're all right now."

"Can we take him along to the asylum now?" queried Hiram Boggles.

"Take him to the asylum?" repeated the doctor.

"Yes."

"What asylum?"

"The lunatic."

"What for?"

"Because he belongs there."

"Is he employed there?"

"Not much. Except to keep a strait-jacket warm."

"But he's not crazy."

"There," cried Gid; "didn't I tell you so?"

"Not crazy?"

"No more than I am."

"What do you think of that?" chuckled Gid, in ecstasy.

"Well, all I can say," muttered Hiram Boggles, "is that he's got cured mighty sudden."

"How do you mean?"

"I mean that he was crazy as a bedbug last night."

"Nonsense!"

"Ask them young fellers."

"And who are they?"

"His friends."

"Do you mean to say your friend was really out of his senses last night?" inquired the physician of Sim.

"Yes," replied the latter, almost suffocating in the effort to keep back a laugh.

"Then it is certainly a most curious case."

"How so?"

"Why, he is as sane as I am now."

"How do you account for that?"

"I scarcely know, except the shock."

"What shock?"

"His fall. People have frequently been restored to reason that way."

This was the very dodge the Devastators had contemplated playing.

Consequently, their delight can be as easily imagined as described.

The drovers believed every word they heard.

The doctor was as much mystified as they were, but he was also very much in earnest.

As for Gid, he was only too glad to be set free to grumble at the means by which that end was brought about.

After the drovers had nearly dragged his arm from its socket, shaking hands with and congratulating him, they carried him in triumph to the hotel they frequented.

There they crammed him so full of food that he could scarcely breathe.

By the time this was done, the news had traveled all over the city.

Scores of people flocked to the hotel to see the young sailor who had so miraculously regained his senses.

A dozen doctors examined his head.

A score of reporters interviewed him.

Numberless charitable ladies loaded him down with presents of all sorts.

And a theatrical manager presented him with a box at his theatre.

It was late that night when the Mystic Three retired to bed.

Next morning early they were called by Hiram Boggles, who said:

"Well, boys, do you stick to your bargain?"

"What bargain?"

"To go bull-whackin' with me?"

"Of course."

"Then we'll have to start to-day. Git your breakfasts first."

"All right."

"Then go down on to the levee, and git aboard the *Cherokee Warrior*. I'll have your tickets."

"All right."

And after a hearty breakfast the Devastators inquired their way to the levee, where the river steamers lay.

CHAPTER LXXVII.

A BULLY COWED.

THE sight which met the eyes of the Mystic Three, on reaching the levee of the city, filled them with wonder and admiration.

A fleet of great river steamboats was drawn up along the levee, their smokestacks, cut in all manner of fantastic designs, showing like a forest of strange trees against the sky.

Vast quantities of goods were being loaded and unloaded, and all was bustle and confusion.

The Devastators were looking for the *Cherokee Warrior*, when a rough-looking customer, in a red flannel shirt, accosted them.

"Well, my buccos," he said, "and what may be the business you're bound on?"

"Well, my fresh friend," remarked Simeon Waldingham Pugsley, "and what business of yours may it be what business we are bound on?"

The rough customer scowled.

"It may be more than you think," he said.

"You don't say so?"

"Yes, I do."

"Even that won't be much, then."

"And why not?"

"Because it strikes me, with the force of a policeman's club, that it's none of your business at all!"

"It's what?"

"None of your business!"

"Oho! So it isn't, eh?"

"Aha! No, it ain't."

The gentleman in the red shirt began to feel around a hip-pocket, out of which the handle of a revolver, nearly as big as a Gatling gun, protruded.

"Do you know who I am?" he snarled.

"No; we don't."

"I thought not."

"And, what's more, we don't care."

"Oho! You don't care, eh?"

"Not a bit."

"Well, you will before you're through with me."

"I wouldn't bet on it if I were you."

The man in the red shirt glared from one to another of the Mystic Three with the expression of a person stupefied.

"Darn my scuttle-butts!" he said, at last, "but this lays over all. Such cheek I never bear in my born days."

"Well, you live and learn, you know," observed Hackaliah Snick, politely.

"And you'll live and learn, too," cried the man, who was working himself up into a passion. "You'd learn who I am."

"When we read about your being hung, do you mean?"

"Me being hung?"

"Yes, you."

"Me, Jim Staggers?"

"Why not? You've got an elegant neck for a halter."

"Just the size," observed Hack.

"And it needs such an ornament," added Gid.

"Stand clear o' me, young fellers."

"Don't get in our way and we will."

"Don't reasperate me, I say."

"You're not worth the trouble."

The audacity of his youthful opponents appeared to paralyze the red-shirted individual's movements for a minute.

Then he gave a jump into the air and landed on his feet with a wild whoop.

"I'm bad, I am," he yelled.

"You look it," observed Gideon Gobie.

"I'm a ring-tailed roarer, I am."

"I thought you were some sort of a monkey."

"I'm the wild man from Borneo."

"Then we've the boys that will tame you."

"You'll tame me?"

"Yes, we will."

"Me, Jim Staggers?"

"Yes, or any other name."

"Me, the mad kangaroo from the wilds of Australia?"

"I thought you were a ring-tailed roarer."

"I'll show you what I am," howled the red-shirted individual, foaming at the mouth and flourishing his revolver like a club; "I'm the real original catamount from the cockeknack pine barrens."

"You don't say so!"

"I'm the ravaging he-wolf from the ten-mile prairie."

"He'll be a whole menagerie next" observed Gid.

"Somebody ought to telegraph for Barnum," remarked Sim.

"I'll telegraph ye!" yelled the man. "I'm the alligator-shaver from Buffalo Bayou. Throw me a man, that I may devour him."

And he gave another leap, accompanied by a howl that would have done credit to an insane hyena.

As he descended, Hackaliah Snick calmly tripped him up.

The ring-tailed roarer rolled on the levee, his pistol discharging itself in his fall.

A terrific braying followed immediately, and a donkey, harnessed in the shafts of a little cart close by, dropped dead.

The mad kangaroo was on his feet in a minute, in time to hear Sim observe:

"That's what I call a clear case of fratricide."

"What do you call this, then?" howled the alligator-shaver.

And he leveled his revolver at Simeon Waldingham Pugsley's head.

To his evident amusement, however, the Devastators did not flinch.

On the contrary, they laughed in his face.

And they also calmly leveled their rifles at him.

At this movement the man paused.

Then he permitted his hand to drop to his side, and said, with a sickly grin:

"Well, well, well. It's just as I thought."

"What is it?" demanded Gideon Gobie.

Jim Staggers is the boy that never makes a mistake."

"Oh, he don't, eh?"

"Never."

"Then what do you call this?"

"Call what?"

"Why, this little game of yours?"

"Fun, boys—pure fun."

"Oh, it was, was it?"

"Regular up and down sport."

"You're a real funny fellow, it seems."

"Am I, just! Only ask the boys what they think of Jim staggers."

"It isn't necessary."

"Why isn't it?"

"Because I do my thinking about you myself."

"You do, eh?"

"Yes, I do."

"And what do you think?"

"I think you're a cowardly——"

"Hello! hello!"

"Bullying——"

"I say, now!"

"Big mouthed——"

"Hold on!"

"Limber-tongued——"

"Hey! hey!"

"Sneaking——"

"What's that?"

"Bag of wind! And if you don't go down on your knees and apologize to us at once you're a dead man."

A roar of laughter burst from the crowd which had gathered to stare at the foregoing scene, and the red-shirted man ripped out a ferocious oath.

The crowd roared again, and Gid said:

"You've got till I count ten to do it in, so mind your eye."

"But hold on, boys," said Jim Staggers, imploringly; "can't you take a little fun?"

"Not from such as you."

"But I only wanted to try you."

"Well, you have."

"To see what you were made of, like."

"You'll find what bullets are made of in a minute," said Gid. "Time's up."

With a last beseeching glance, the ring-tailed roarer dropped on his knees.

Before he could commence his apology, however, there was a movement on the outskirts of the grinning crowd.

Then a fat negro woman broke through the circle.

Her woolly hair stood on end with wrath, and her eyes snapped with indignation.

"Whar am he?" she yelled. "Fotch 'im out, an' I done take de wind outin' him!"

"Who is it, aunty?" asked Sim.

"De man dat done kill my donkey."

"I guess that's him."

And he pointed to Jim Staggers.

In a minute more there was war on the levee.

The shrill screams of Jim Staggers begging for mercy were heartrending.

But the heart of his sable enemy was adamant.

She was determined to get the value of her murdered donkey out of the assassin.

And she got it.

The cowed bully was beaten nearly to a mummy, when a shrill whistle pierced the air and a very loud bell began to clang.

At the same time some steamboat runners began to dash about, yelling:

"All aboard for the *Cherokee Warrior!* All aboard now!"

"There's our boat," exclaimed Sim. "Come on, boys!"

And the Mystic Three followed one of the runners down the levee.

They were just in time.

They reached the deck, and the gangplank was being drawn on board, when a dilapidated figure dashed down the levee.

It was Jim Staggers, pursued by his dusky foe.

The fugitive bully made a leap and landed on the steamer's deck as the boat pulled off.

His pursuer, carried away by the rapidity of her gait, plunged into the water.

She was too fat to sink, and the last the Devastators saw of her she was bobbing about in the water like a cork, shrieking maledictions after her escaping prey.

CHAPTER LXXVIII.

UP THE MISSOURI.

WHEN the boat was fairly under way the Mystic Three set to work to find their employer.

After some search they discovered him playing cards in the cabin with the purser.

He handed them their tickets, and told them to lay around and amuse themselves till supper-time, when he would get them a place to sleep.

This advice precisely suited them.

In a very short time they had explored the boat thoroughly.

One of the first things they discovered was that Mr. Jim Staggers was a most notorious character.

He was a ruffian who infested one of the towns far up on the Missouri River, and when he got on one of his periodical sprees was universally dreaded.

Or, at least, he had been.

Now the story of his defeat was in everybody's mouth, and even the colored boy who washed the glasses in the bar-room did not scruple to express his contempt for him.

He tried to bluster, but it was no use.

People who had once trembled in their boots when he looked at them, now laughed in his face.

At last he slunk away, and as he passed the three boys he shook his fist at them and hissed:

"Never mind."

"We don't," replied Sim.

"Not in the least," added Gid.

"In fact, by no manner of means," finished Hack.

"I'll get even with you yet."

"You're welcome to."

Jim Staggers growled out a savage imprecation and disappeared.

The Mystic Three, left to their own devices, strolled forward and sat down on a dry-goods box on the bow, to enjoy their journey.

And they did enjoy it.

The *Cherokee Warrior* was steaming steadily up the great Missouri River.

The stream was high, and its muddy waters flowed as steadily and smoothly as if they had been yellow molasses, licking the high grass on the banks and caressing the pendent branches of the trees.

The steamer coughed out huge volumes of black smoke, and the steady pounding of her paddles sent little wavelets rippling out on either side.

They were still staring ahead of them, entranced by the novelty of all they saw, when the sun set, and the loud banging of a gong called them to supper.

They sat at one of several long tables, all crowded with people.

And as chance had it, Mr. Jim Staggers occupied the opposite place to them.

It was evident from the first that that worthy had made up his mind to be disagreeable.

In fact, he commenced at once.

"Here, waiter!" he roared, as one of the colored flunkies approached the Mystic Three to take their orders.

"Yes, sah," responded the negro.

"Come here, right off."

"Soon's as I wait on dese gemmen, sah."

"Don't you wait on nobody till you git through with me."

"But dey is waitin' for me, sah."

"Let 'em wait, then."

Not caring to have any further quarrel, Hack said:

"You'd better wait on him first, Sam. If you don't he'll perhaps starve to death."

"All that would be a pity," added Gid.

"The world would never survive the loss," remarked Sim.

"We'd all go and commit suicide, sure."

The grinning negro approached Mr. Staggers and said:

"Well, sah, what kin I do foh you, sah?"

"I've changed my mind," was the reply. "Wait on them first."

Accordingly the waiter took the order, and soon returned, bearing the first relay of the meal in the form of a piping-hot beefsteak and onions for three.

When Jim Staggers's eyes lighted on it, he exclaimed:

"By the roarin' buffalo! just what I want!"

And taking the dish from the amazed waiter's hands, he began to eat it up himself.

"Never mind," said Hack, with a wink at his companions; "bring us some veal-cutlet."

The darkey went away.

When he returned with the required comestible, Jim Staggers had gobbled down half his steak.

Now he seized the cutlet in the same way.

"Hole on, sah!" ejaculated the waiter.

"I am," replied Mr. Staggers.

"Dem cutlets b'longs to dem gemmen, sah."

"What do I care for that?"

"But dey wants 'em to eat, sah."

"So do I."

"All right, Sam," interposed Hack. "Fetch us some mutton-chops."

Again the waiter departed and again he returned.

Again Jim Staggers stretched out his hand and seized the fresh dish.

This time the sable servitor made a desperate resistance.

He knew Jim Staggers of old, and was well aware of the fact that he had no gratuity to expect from him.

On the other hand, he hoped by waiting attentively on the Mystic Three to extract a quarter or so from them by way of a tip.

"Let go dem ar chops, sah," he yelled.

"Drop that plate," replied Jim Staggers.

"I won't!"

"You will!"

"I tells ye I won't, sah!"

"And I tell you you will!"

All this time the darkey had been holding on to one end of the big dish, while Jim Staggers gripped the other. Now the latter gave the dish a jerk.

And at the same time he planted his number seventeen boot in poor Sam's abdomen.

The consequence was a perfectly natural one.

The darkey released his hold on the plate and staggered back.

Mr. Staggers, however, had miscalculated.

He had not allowed for the sudden release of the plate.

So when the darkey let go he tumbled over backward, sending the dish and its contents flying into the face of a man at the table behind him.

That person jumped up at once.

At the same time a big dog, on which Jim Staggers had fallen, fastened its teeth in his ear.

The ruffian set up a howl like a Comanche war-whoop.

The dog only growled savagely, and chewed away for dear life.

"Bite him, Bowser!" cried the dog's owner, who happened to be the very person on whom the rain of chops had descended.

"Murder alive!" yelled Jim Staggers.

"Sick him, dog!" commanded the animal's master.

"Wow, wow, wow!" said Bowser.

And he took a fresh nip.

The confusion was now complete.

Mr. Staggers was rolling on the floor, filling the cabin with oaths and supplications, while all the passengers had jumped up to see what was the matter.

In the midst of the riot the captain appeared on the scene.

He was a tall man, with red hair and a fiery temper.

When the matter was explained to him he flew into a furious passion.

"Git up, you varmint," he cried, kicking Jim Staggers till his wife fairly smarted.

The dog, at this address, let go of what was left of his victim's ear, and the latter obeyed the command with celerity.

"Why, it's Jim Staggers!" ejaculated the captain.

"Of course it is," said Mr. Staggers.

"You bullying blackguard, what do you mean, kicking up a row on my boat?" demanded the skipper.

"I wasn't."

"You wasn't?"

"No."

"Then I'm a liar, I s'pose?"

"Who said you were?"

"You did. Git."

And the captain pointed to the cabin door.

"What will I git for?" demanded Jim Staggers.

"Because I tell you to."

"But I want my supper."

"Oh, you do?"

"Yes. And I'm going to have it."

"You are, eh?"

"I paid for it."

"So you did, to be sure."

"And I've got a right to it."

"That you have, Sam?"

"Yes, sah," replied the waiter.

"Fetch a dishpan."

The dishpan was brought.

"Now empty them into it."

And the captain pointed to the scraps on the several dishes Jim Staggers had been assaulting.

These remnants were tumbled into the pan, forming a mess unsavory-looking enough to disgust any one.

"What's that for?" demanded Jim Staggers.

"For you," replied the skipper.

"For me?"

"Yes. You want your dinner, don't you?"

"S'pose I do?"

"Well, you don't know how to eat like a decent man."

"Why don't I?"

"Because you don't. So I'm going to let you grub with the pigs. Carry that pan forward to the pig-sty, Sam."

"Yes, sah."

"And you foller it."

And the captain commenced kicking Jim Staggers out of the cabin.

The latter started to run, but the skipper was too much for him.

Tripping him up, he commanded half a dozen stalwart darkies to seize him.

Then Mr. Staggers was lugged, body, bones and pantaloons, out of the cabin.

And forward to the sty, where half a dozen pigs, for the consumption of the passengers, were waiting to be converted into pork.

Among them he was tumbled, all of a heap, and the captain said:

"Now, then, gents. Excuse the interruption, and commence over again. If we run short of everything else, we know we've got plenty of hog aboard."

(To be continued.)

"The Mystic Three" was commenced in No. 677.

SPORT IN THE GALAPAGOS.

THE Galapagos are a group of islands lying directly on the equator, in the Pacific Ocean, ten degrees west of South America. They belong to the Republic of Ecuador. These islands are mountainous and barren, except on the higher parts, where there is plenty of vegetation. They are of volcanic origin, and extinct craters may be seen on some of them. On Albemarle Island, the largest of the group, there is a volcano, said to be in active operation. Quantities of iguanas are to be found on most of the islands, and the waters abound with fish, turtle and seals.

In 1872 there were a few people living on Charles Island, employed in collecting orchilla-weed, and looking after the interests of Señor Val de San, who rents the island from the Government of Ecuador. There are about two thousand head of wild cattle on this island. These animals were originally introduced by the Spaniards, at the time of the Conquest of Peru, since which time they have increased wonderfully. They appear not to have assumed any particular shade of color, but every variety was represented as in the tame sort. In size they were even superior to domestic cattle, which might be accounted for by the excellent pasturage on the island. The bulls are very savage, and, if wounded, will immediately charge.

The accompanying sketch represents a bull in the act of charging, after having received a ball behind the shoulder. Fortunately, a well-directed shot between the eyes gave him the *coup de grâce* at ten yards' distance. A second fine bull already lay dead close by. A brace of bulls before breakfast is by no means a "bad bag."

During the night, says an officer, who stopped there to hunt, we were constantly disturbed by the cattle which were feeding close by, but it was too dark to see to shoot them. The sergeant fired at one by the water, and, supposing him to be wounded, gave chase. It was just beginning to get light, and, with my night-glasses, I could distinguish the beast galloping away, with the sergeant and a bluejacket in full chase. Presently the gunner's mate, who had remained with me, reported two fine bulls coming across the open, and requested leave to fire on them, at the same time dropping on the knee in the most approved fashion. I told him to hold on until I had examined them with the glasses. They turned out to be the sergeant and his companion returning from their fruitless chase.

By daybreak we were ready for a start, and, fortified against the wet morning by hot coffee and bread, the sergeant and another went after cattle, whilst I took another direction, accompanied by Rigketts, in search of pigs. A native armed with a spear came with us as guide.

We walked from daylight until ten o'clock without seeing a single pig, although their tracks were everywhere to be seen, and we had good dogs; but we came across numbers of cattle, some of which plunged into the thicket, others stopped in the open to take a look at us. We could easily have killed several of them, but did not care to do so, as we should have had some difficulty in getting the meat back to the hut, and we had already as much as we required. We also took a herd of wild asses, and our guide said there were horses and goats, besides domestic fowls, wild on the island, but we walked hard in a drenching rain for several hours and saw none of them, and we were at length obliged to return to the hut, as we had a long walk to the boat the same afternoon. The colonel told us that the year before our visit there had been a great drought, and that about a thousand head of cattle died; he estimated the remainder at about two thousand. His men usually killed one a week for their own use; their plan was to wait at the water where they came to drink. This custom, though a tolerably sure one, is not unattended with danger, for one of the men had been gored to death by a bull which he had wounded, and another had been pinned by the ankle whilst attempting to climb a tree, and was on the sick-list at the time of our visit.

We failed to observe any of the terrapin or land tortoise, for which these islands used to be so celebrated, and the colonel informed us that they had been taken away by the whalers in such quantities that they were well-nigh exterminated, but that a few were still to be found on some of the islands, more especially on Albemarle.

Talks with Boys about Foreign Lands.

PRINCE WALDEMAR AT ST. THOMAS.

IT must be a very enjoyable thing to be a Prince Royal, and not the least pleasant things connected with that position are the jolly junketings that always attend the progress of such a personage through the domain which he is one day to rule over.

Such an occasion has been the recent cruise through the Danish colonies in the West Indies of H. R. H. Prince Waldemar of Denmark. His home during this cruise was on board the Danish man-of-war *Dagmar*, which had been regally fitted up for the occasion. The most enthusiastic reception given to him was at Charlotte Amalie, the capital, and, in fact, the only town of the island of St. Thomas.

When the *Dagmar* arrived in the harbor, with the prince on board, the whole town was in gala costume, and flags, flowers and triumphal arches were displayed on every hand. The prince landed amid the acclamations of the people, and was received by the Governor and the members of the Colonial Council, the chairman of which welcomed in an English speech the royal guest, who replied in the same language. The prince then entered an open carriage, and was conducted through the crowded and gayly decorated streets to the Government House, where he held a reception of officers, burghers and other island notabilities.

He subsequently visited the parade ground, where he witnessed some athletic sports, and then drove again through the town to the Government House. In the evening the town and suburbs were illuminated, and there was a brilliant display of fireworks.

The little island of St. Thomas is one of the Virgin group in the West Indies, and has an area of only 35 square miles and a population of about 15,000, of whom two-thirds are black. It belongs to Denmark, but about twelve years ago it was very anxious to come under the sheltering wing of the United States.

Negotiations to this effect began in 1867, and a vote being taken on the island showed that the inhabitants were almost unanimously in favor of it, the vote being 1,544 for and only 22 against, but the project fell through in the United States Senate.

Doubtless it is just as well for while it might have been convenient to have had St. Thomas as a coaling station for our naval vessels, the island is represented as a veritable lever pest, and is often ravaged by hurricanes and earthquakes.

Distinguished Scholars of Brooklyn (N. Y.) Schools.

JOHN M. PERRY,

PUPIL OF GRAMMAR SCHOOL NO. 26, GATES AVENUE, BROOKLYN, N. Y.

JOHN M. PERRY is a boy of distinguished rank in the highest class of Grammar School No. 26, Gates, near Ralph, Avenue, Brooklyn, N. Y. He was born in that city, June 25th, 1866, making him thirteen years of age. He is the son of the late John M. and K. E. Perry. At an early age he began to study at home, so that when he entered his present school at the age of seven he was competent to go into the sixth primary grade, one above the lowest. From that time he has been honorably identified with the school. When he came to the third primary class he was skipped over it, and when he was promoted to the next department it was with an excellent record. In the higher studies he applied himself with increased ardor, and in each of the classes made his mark. He is now among a fine lot of boys and girls in the highest class. More than this, he has a very intelligent and critical teacher, and she gave us his per centage as about ninety-five. He has a large head, with regular and expressive features. His manners are naturally easy and polite, and his intelligence is to be seen as well in his face as in his conversation. He is a boy whose future is hopeful, because he is guided by the right motives, and has the moral and mental strength to give him character and influence.

Grammar School No. 26 is a large and flourishing school under the principalship of James E. Ryan. The register is over twelve hundred pupils, and the instruction and discipline are of the most efficient kind.

THOMAS P. ALDER,

PUPIL OF PUBLIC SCHOOL NO. 28, HERKIMER STREET, BROOKLYN, N. Y.

THOMAS P. ALDER is a diligent and ambitious pupil of the first-class of Public School No. 28, Herkimer Street, Brooklyn, N. Y. The studies in this school only extend to the third grammar grade. When five years old Alder entered the lowest class of the Primary Department, and his whole career in the school has been satisfactory. He has shown a disposition to learn, and his intelligent reasoning when asked for explanations in the class is regarded by his teachers as something beyond the average of pupils. He makes no noise or show, but he has a substantial basis of knowledge which many other young learners are indifferent about, and hence fall back when mere memorizing fails them. He stands about the same in all the studies, with an average per centage of ninety-eight. He is of a most amiable disposition, and is highly regarded by all who know him. He has an erect, well-proportioned figure, and a pleasant face. He is the son of Thomas and Margaret Alder. He was born in New Jersey, April 11th, 1866, and is, therefore, in his twelfth year. Let him regard the fact of his present selection as a representative of the scholarship of a large school as an incentive to be the representative of an honorable manhood in the time to come.

Public School No. 28 has over seven hundred pupils in two departments. The Principal of the Grammar Department is Miss Ella Folger, a lady of great ability and conscientiousness in the discharge of her duties.

SPORT IN THE GALAPAGOS.—A WOUNDED BULL CHARGING.

Rob Rollalong, the Runaway.

By BRACEBRIDGE HEMYNG,

AUTHOR OF THE "JACK HARKAWAY" AND "DICK LIGHTHEART" STORIES, ETC., ETC., ETC.

CHAPTER XXI.

THE PROGRESS OF THE PLOT.

WHEN Doctor Ames returned with his party to the castle, there was general rejoicing.

A bottle of wine was opened and Hattie's health drank with enthusiasm.

The best table-cloth the storeroom could afford was spread upon the table; the choicest meats and canned fruits, birds and goat-meat were cooked; and after dinner songs were sung, stories told, and every one was happy.

Hattie Elliott had recovered her spirits, but she looked very grave, and after a while she exclaimed:

"I want to make a little speech, if I may be allowed."

"Certainly," replied the doctor.

"First of all, I want to thank you very much, indeed, for your kindness. You have rescued me from an awful death, and I am grateful. You bring me to your pleasant little home, where in future you must permit me to be cook and housemaid and general help."

"No, no," said the boys.

"But I say yes. It is a woman's place. You go and hunt and plant corn and amuse yourselves. I'll bet, you'll always have your good dinner on time!"

"Hear, hear!" cried the doctor.

"Rah! for Hattie," shouted Rob.

"Just repress some of that enthusiasm, Master Rob," continued Hattie. "Because I don't want any praise or thanks for what I propose to do. I am one of you, and am not going to eat the bread of idleness—that's not my principle."

"Not much; you were always a good worker," said Rob.

"What I desire most to say is," continued Hattie, "that I had welcomed death at the hands of the savages as a happy release from my misery. Vango I once trusted. He helped my mother and me when we were poor. I thought I loved him, but he turned out to be a villain. He is a murderer. That I saw with my own eyes, for he killed Soft Tommy. Still I pitied him. He was a cripple. He had been good and kind to me, and I was fool-ish."

Rob looked at her with intense interest.

"Now I see how wrong I was," she went on, casting her eyes down modestly, "and if my cousin Rob will forgive me and look over the past I'll be his sweetheart again, and try and love him as truly

as I know he has loved me always."

"Give up old Vangs?" said Rob.

"Yes."

"For ever?"

"Never think of him any more," replied Hattie. "I have been a foolish girl, Rob, but not a bad one."

"And you'll be my own dear little girl all the time?"

"Yes, indeed."

"And if we ever get away from this desert island you will be my wife?"

"Yes, I will, Rob, and only too glad of the chance, for you're a good-hearted, solid fellow, and I love you."

Rob got up and kissed her tenderly. "That settles it all," he said. "Now I can be the happiest boy on this island, and I don't give a snap of the fingers for anybody. I don't care even if I never quit it."

"Oh, I'd like to go back," said Hattie, smiling.

"I wouldn't," replied Rob. "I'd like to be the Boy King of the Island Wild."

"You wouldn't have many subjects," said the doctor.

"Those I had, I'd keep in order," answered Rob. After this speech of Hattie's they got a pack of cards and played poker, using shells for counters, and had, as Rob said, "a bully time." He sat next to Hattie, and he was nearly all the time squeezing one of her hands under the table.

Never before had he felt so happy.

JOHN M. PERRY, PUPIL OF GRAMMAR SCHOOL NO. 26, GATES AVENUE, BROOKLYN, N. Y.

It was wonderful, he thought, to have Hattie all to himself on a desert island, and to hear that she did not like Vangs any more.

After they had been playing some time, Kedge exclaimed:

"Say, doc, we've all forgotten one thing in the excitement of the day."

"What's that?" replied the doctor.

"We haven't fed our captive. Poor fellow, with all his bounce and cheek, I pity him. He must be awfully lonely, and thirsty, and hungry. Shall I go and feed him?"

"Why, certainly."

"What shall I take?"

"Oh, we won't be too severe on him," replied the doctor. "This is a sort of a Thanksgiving Day with us, and we'll be generous. Take him the same as we eat ourselves. Let him live on the fat of the land, if it's only for a little while."

"Good enough," replied Kedge.

He went and filled a basket with various little delicacies, which he thought Jack Johnson would like, and started off for the cave. Hattie asked a variety of questions, until she knew all about Jack Johnson, and how he had behaved.

"How bad of him to behave like that!" she said.

"It would serve him right if the cannibals caught him."

"If you were queen of the island, what would you do with him?" said Rob.

"I'd pardon him," replied Hattie.

"Doc," said Rob, "you hear what our future queen says?"

"I do, my dear boy; but with all respect that is due to Miss Hattie, I don't think her head is altogether level on that point. Johnson is a dangerous and vindictive man. He is the worst sort of Englishman, and his English always comes uppermost—not that I want to say anything against England; only that it does send some awful specimens of humanity over here. Its convicts are sent to Australia, and those who ought to be convicts come over here to escape their fate. We get the scum, and Jack Johnson is as fine a specimen of the Old World's scum as you could wish to see swing on a gallows."

"I've never seen this Mr. Johnson, but are you not a little too hard on him, doctor?"

"Not the least bit in the world."

"Is he all your fancy paints him?"

"He is; and you can throw into the bargain all I know him to be."

They continued talking until Kedge came back from the cave, and from the expression of his face they fancied that something had happened.

"What's the matter?" said the doctor, sharply.

"The bird's flown," replied Kedge.

"How?"

"Jack Johnson has given us all the leg he's got, for the cave's empty, save and except an old billy-goat, who takes up his quarters there, and who gave me Jessie as I came in."

"What did he do?"

"Knocked me flatter than a Passover cake. I haven't got my wind yet; but I went on the war-path and took his scalp."

"You did?"

"You bet you I did. My knife cut his throat and took all the butt out of him, and don't you forget it."

"Never mind the goat," exclaimed the doctor, twirling his fingers in a nervous manner. "Talk about Johnson. He is gone?"

"Yes, sir."

"Are you sure he is gone?"

"I'm as solid on that as I ever was about anything in my life, because the cave isn't a very large one, and after I'd caught and killed that old goat, who butted me with his old horns, I searched every corner and couldn't find any trace of Johnson, Esquire, late of the Royal Navy."

"He couldn't have got away of his own accord—that is to say, he must have had help," said the doctor.

"Where could he get it, sir?"

"That's what I can't make out; but there is a possible combination which alarms me," the doctor replied, thoughtfully.

"What is that, sir?" asked Kedge.

"Suppose Vangs and the professor, looking for a place to camp in, should have discovered the cave and liberated Johnson, and they would fall into line together and swear to do us all the harm they can?"

"In that case, doc, there can only be one opinion as to what we ought to do," replied Kedge.

"And that is?"

"Shoot them down like dogs if they try to do us any harm. We have ourselves to take care of, and we should be fools if we did not look after Number One."

"Quite so," said the doctor. "I am a humane man, and wouldn't hurt a fellow-creature for the world, except in self-defense; and I think we ought, for our own sakes, to go and hunt these fellows down and capture them."

"What would you do with them then?" asked Hattie.

"Shoot them," said Rob.

"Oh! Rob, you bad boy! I shan't love you a bit if you talk like that," she said, with a reproachful glance.

"You girls are too tender-hearted," answered Rob.

"No," said the doctor. "I am inclined to think Miss Hattie's right. It is necessary for our safety that we capture Vangs and the professor, who, I believe, have rescued Johnson from his captivity in the cave. We must also secure Johnson, for this island will never hold the two parties. When we catch them, we will put them in a boat and send them to some other island."

"Might most as well kill them out of hand," said Rob.

"Why?"

"Cannibals will eat them."

"No matter; we don't kill them; we give them a show, and there our humanity ends," replied the doctor, with a half-smile, which showed that he did not very much care what became of the "gang," so long as his particular island was rid of them.

The boys made Hattie a little bed in the storeroom.

It was raised up about two feet from the floor, and did their carpentering instincts great credit. On the top they piled dry grass and ship's blankets, so that it was soft, and to cover her they gave her one sheet and a comforter.

Next morning, after breakfast, the doctor and Kedge set out to look for Vangs and the others.

Rob and Hattie remained to watch the castle, in case of a surprise, although the doctor did not think they would dare come near the house.

In his hand Rob held a single-barreled gun, and he walked outside of the castle, followed by Hattie. A handsome parrot flew on a tree near by, and attracted Hattie's attention by its beautiful plumage.

"Oh, shoot that for me," she exclaimed. "His wing will just do for my hat. Goodness knows it's shabby enough, and that feather will just set it off."

Rob raised his gun and fired.

The bird fell fluttering to the ground and he ran to pick it up.

Scarcely had he seized the poor thing than he heard a cry, and looking round saw Hattie struggling in the arms of a man.

That man was Vangs. Not thinking that he ought to reload his gun, he started to her assistance, though, as Vangs was a cripple, and had to support himself with one arm on a crutch while he used the other, he might have known that Hattie was able to take her own part.

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However, he ran forward, carrying his empty gun at the trail.

Scarcely had he gone a dozen yards when two people sprang out of the long grass and dragged him to the ground.

He struggled fiercely.

It was of no avail, for he was in the power of Jack Johnson and the professor, who quickly made his arms fast behind his back.

By this time Vangs had mastered Hattie, who fell in a faint at his feet, which was not to be wondered at, as he had hit her on the head, regardless of the pain he caused her. Rob endeavored to cry out, and so give the alarm to the doctor and Kedge, if they should be anywhere in the neighborhood, but Johnson stopped his mouth with grass, and he could not utter a sound.

They left him lying on the grass, while they carried Hattie into the castle.

Their first care was to ransack the storeroom for arms, and each provided himself with a rifle, a revolver and cartridges.

"Ain't this bully?" cried Vangs. "We've done it beautiful. Professor, you stand guard at the entrance, and shoot down the first cuss that shows a head. The doctor and Kedge have arms, and we must expect a fight."

"All right, my festive fungus," replied the professor, who did as he was told.

He walked out through the passage cut through the trees by which the castle was surrounded and looked for Rob.

"Where's that genius, I wonder?" he exclaimed.

At that moment he

TALKS WITH BOYS ABOUT FOREIGN LANDS.—PRINCE WALDEMAR'S VISIT TO THE DANISH WEST INDIES.

Second Prize.

Third Prize.

First Prize.

OUR DRAWING TABLE.—FOURTH COMPETITION.

caught sight of Rob running away. They had tied his hands and stopped his mouth, but they had forgotten that he could use his legs, and no sooner were their backs turned than he "scooted at 2:40" speed.

The professor fired his rifle, but missed. Alarmed at the sound, Vangs and Johnson came out.

By this time Rob had made such good use of his opportunity that he was out of sight.

CHAPTER XXII.

RESIGNERS AND RESIGNED.

ROB ROLLALONG was running for his life, and it can be readily imagined that he did not let the grass grow under his feet.

Fortunately, he escaped the shots which were fired after him, and got away from his pursuers; but he did not stop running until he met the doctor and Kedge, who were in the vineyard.

This was a place where they had trained vines to grow over poles which they placed in the ground, and when the grapes were ripe enough they gathered the luscious bunches, hanging them on lines stretched from post to post, so that they might dry in the sun, and as raisins add to their stock of food.

The grapes were now ripe and in fine condition, so, having in vain hunted for Johnson, the doctor and Kedge were sitting down in the shade, slaking their thirst by eating the delicious fruit.

On seeing Rob enter the vineyard running at the top of his speed, his cap gone, his hair flying in the wind, his face white and his eyes almost starting from his head, they guessed in a moment that something had happened, and their suspicion was strengthened by the fact that his arms were bound behind his back.

Starting to their feet, they seized their rifles, and put themselves on the defensive, expecting every moment that some pursuers would show themselves.

Whether these would appear as white men or savages they could not tell, and awaited eagerly Rob's approach, so as to get the news.

When he stopped running the boy was so out of breath that he could not speak, though he attempted to do so.

"Take your time," exclaimed the doctor. "Easy does it. We can wait. Don't choke yourself and burst a blood-vessel."

At length Rob was sufficiently recovered to speak, and he cried: "The castle's taken!"

"Taken!" replied the doctor and Kedge in a breath, while their countenances fell. "Who by?"

"Jack Johnson and the two white men—the same one and the other you rescued from the cannibals, and the worst is they've got Hattie."

"That's bad news," exclaimed the doctor. "How did it happen? Did they catch you asleep? I thought when we placed you on guard that the castle was perfectly safe in your hands, and I wouldn't have had this happen for a thousand dollars."

A look of intense annoyance crossed the doctor's face.

"Don't blame Rob," said Kedge, "until you hear all about it. Perhaps he wasn't so much in fault, after all."

"I declare it could not be helped," replied Rob, and he told them all that we detailed in the last chapter.

"Well, well," said the doctor, "it's a bad job, and we must make the best of it, though it's awfully annoying. How Johnson could have got away and met them, or how they could have discovered Johnson in the cave, is one of the mysteries which I, for one, will not attempt to solve."

"They'll have a high old time in the castle," remarked Kedge. "I like to0 bad! Only think of the time and trouble we have expended on that house, and fancy their walking in and taking it, furnished with all our stores, and the nice things to eat and drink, we had put away."

"Oh, they are welcome to that, for my part," said Rob. "I wouldn't care if I had my darling Hattie here. It is so hard to find her only to lose her."

"I've a notion we shan't be long out of our own," observed the doctor.

"How's that, doc?"

"We know what kind of a genius Jack Johnson is, and he's sure to make for the liquor. Most likely Vangs and the other fellow will follow his example, and if they do, our opportunity will arrive."

"Oughtn't we to wait for night?"

"Certainly; and under cover of the darkness we will steal up to the castle, listen to the sounds within, and if there should be any chance of making a successful attack, we'll make it, for have the castle again we must and will."

The determined tone in which Doctor Ames spoke somewhat reassured the boys, who were terribly crestfallen at losing their nice home.

"If we catch them, sir, what shall we do with them?" asked Rob.

"Shoot them!" cried Kedge, who was very angry and indignant; "or keep them as slaves."

"Neither one or the other," replied the doctor.

"I don't want to be hard on them, sir," continued Kedge; "but you must admit that this island can't hold them and us at the same time. We should never be safe, and either they should master us, as they have done now, or we should them, and then they would only watch their opportunities to go for us again."

"Hear what I have to suggest," said the doctor. "If we are lucky enough to capture them without bloodshed, I prefer to put them in a boat."

"Where is the boat to come from?"

"The cannibals left one of their large canoes on the beach when they fled yesterday. It it could carry them, it is sale for any one else, and the captives can sail over to one of the other islands in the group."

"Suppose the cannibals catch them again and eat them?"

The doctor shrugged his shoulders as if this view of the case was a matter of indifference to him.

"If they do," he replied, "they must, and I can't help it. We give the fellows a chance for their lives, and what happens to them after they leave this island is their own lookout. We spare their lives and give them a show, which is more than they deserve."

"I think that is a very good idea of doc's," observed Kedge.

"I'm sure I don't care what becomes of them, for Jack Johnson is such a bad lot that it is no use wasting any sympathy over him; as for Vangs, I hate him like poison."

"You have reason to."

"If he were lying dead at my feet this minute, I don't think I'd take the trouble to bury him."

"We are taught to forgive our enemies," said the doctor; "but at the same time we must protect ourselves. I vote we stop here till night, and then creep up to the castle. You are unarmed, Rob; take my revolver. It will do to shoot with at close quarters, if we have to fight."

"You must cut the string that binds my arms first, sir," replied Rob, laughing.

"Thunder! that's so. I'd forgotten that."

Doctor Ames drew his knife and set him free, upon which Rob danced a breakdown, and suddenly made a dive for a melon which he saw in the grass, singing, "Oh, dat watermelon, land of goodness, come bym-by!" and cutting it up, was soon slaking his thirst with its delicious contents.

The day passed slowly, and the doctor and the boys discussed their plans, at the same time keeping a good lookout, for they couldn't tell whether or not Vangs and his friends would come out and hunt them down like wild animals.

At length the night fell, and they prepared for action.

When they drew near the castle, they sank down in the grass, and crawled along on their stomachs to avoid being seen.

It was lucky that they did so, as it might have cost them their lives if they had advanced without caution.

At the entrance to the alley leading to the house, a man was posted, and in the half light which a tropical night supplies, they recognised the professor of mushrooms.

The two leaning on his gun in a careless manner, and not holding his rifle in the hollow of his arm, ready for instant use, as he ought to have done had he been a good and careful sentinel.

Probably he was very much bored, and thought it too bad to have to stand outside when his companions were enjoying themselves within, and it is just possible that he had been drinking wine or spirits enough to make him feel sleepy, and care very little whether school kept or not.

It would have been easy for the doctor to fire upon the professor and bring him down.

Indeed, there were several reasons why this would be a good plan, because Vangs and Johnson might run out on hearing the shot, and get killed by their rashness, as Kedge had a rifle, and the doctor would have time to load again.

Kedge, who was near the doctor, suggested this in a whisper.

"Bring him down, doc, or shall I?" he exclaimed.

"No," replied Doctor Ames.

"Why not give him the lead? Let me plunge it into him."

"I say no! We are not assassins. It is cowardly. Kill him in a fair fight if you are driven to it."

That settled it, and Kedge, seeing he was wrong, said no more, though the professor certainly made a very tempting shot.

Crawling to the back of the castle, the doctor, followed by the two boys, climbed into the trees, made his way through the branches, and reached the roof, halting near the trap-door which we have had occasion to speak of before.

Holding up his hand to enjoin silence, the doctor bent his head down and listened.

Through a chink in the wood he could see the interior of the castle sitting-room, in which were grouped Vangs, Jack Johnson and Hattie.

The latter was fastened by ropes to a chair, so that she could not move, although she formed one of the party.

Bottles on the table and empty bottles on the floor, demijohns with the corks out, and a general di-play of confusion and disorder, plainly told the tale. It said how the new owners of the castle had at once plunged into riot and excess, celebrating the first day of their occupation with a disgraceful orgie.

Jack Johnson was tipsy, and Vangs was not far from attaining that undesirable pitch of vinous hilarity.

Poor Hattie! what she must have suffered while in the hands of these brutal men, for Vangs had evidently ceased to treat her with respect, and had not forgiven her for going so readily with Rob and his friends.

She had been crying, for her eyes were red and swollen with weeping, and the muscles of her face twitched convulsively, as if she had worked herself into a hysterical state.

"Vangs!" exclaimed Johnson, raising a glass to his lips, "this is bully. You can bet that we have done a good thing for ourselves, and now we're here, we mean to stop here."

"That's sure as you live," replied Vangs.

"You're a jolly good fellow, Vangs, and I'll be hanged if I don't like you, for you're good company when you've got your skin full of whisky, and no mistake about it. Bash my wig, this is what I like. How do you find it?"

"Just suits me. I wonder how Rob Rollalong and his friends are making out?"

"Oh, they can go to the deuce," said Johnson. "Beg your pardon, miss, for swearing; but if you keep house for us, you'll have to be one of the boys."

"Don't apologize," replied Hattie, in a sarcastic tone. "It does not become you, as I could expect nothing but ruffianism and brutality from such as you."

"What are you going back on him for? He's one of my friends," said Vangs.

"You are just as bad," she answered, "and I hate you both."

"Once you loved me."

"I did not know your true character."

"But you promised to be my wife, and I shall keep you up to it. The professor shall marry us. He'll do for a priest. We can't get the right article on this island, so we'll use him."

"I'd rather die," answered Hattie, firmly.

"That's foolish talk. You're mine. Don't you waste your mind in thinking about Rob Rollalong, for we're going to have a man-hunt to-morrow."

"A what?" she demanded, in surprise.

"We're going to hunt Rob and Kedge and the other down, and shoot them like dogs. Ain't we, Johnson?"

"That's so," replied Jack, with a grin.

"You are an inhuman monster," said Hattie, "and you are wrong if you suppose you can make me like you by such remarks."

"I don't give a cent whether you like me or not. Pass bottle, Jack," answered Vangs, who was getting more drunk every moment. "That right, ole fellow. So!—steady there! Never spill good liquor," he added, as he poured the fiery bourbon on to the table instead of into the glass.

But he soon corrected this mistake, and filling up the wine-glass, tossed the spirit down his throat.

Taking up one of his crutches, he knocked forcibly on the table, to give emphasis to his words.

"Professor shall marry us, that's what I say. You're my wife, and you'll have to keep house for me. Is that straight? I'm talking now. Is that United States?"

"I'm a poor, defenseless girl, and entirely in your power," replied Hattie. "But I will rather die than submit, and I am sure that Heaven will never allow such a wrong to be done."

"Oh, pshaw!"

"Oh, why did I not know what you were before, that I might have been saved all this misery!"

She began to weep bitterly, but the ruffian took no notice of her.

"Say, Vangs," exclaimed Johnson, "the girl don't seem to like you more than she does me, and I don't see what right you've got to her, when she don't want you."

"What are you drivin' at?" asked Vangs.

"Let's toss up who has her. It's only fair. I don't see why you should claim her."

"Wasn't she engaged to me before we sailed?"

"I don't know nothing about that."

"You're talking like a fool, and don't understand the matter. The girl's mine, and who dares to say she isn't? You are a heavy rooster, but you don't play points on me. No, sir."

"Oh, well, I suppose it's all right. If you claim the girl, you've got to have her."

"Now you're talking," said Vangs, smiling; "and shiver my topsails if I don't clinch the nail to-night."

"Do what?"

"I'll have the professor in, and he shall marry us to-night. That'll simplify matters ever so much, and put the question at rest."

"I wouldn't be safe to-night. Somebody's got to watch."

"Avast heaving," said Vangs. "You can't stop this marriage, I tell you, so it's no use your trying. Go and watch yourself, and send the professor in."

"Not me," replied Johnson. "I'm comfortable, and have no notion of moving myself off. I am too good a judge to budge an inch out of this ranch, we don't fluster about me, governor."

"Am I boss here, or not?"

"Not knowing, can't say, and not feeling interested, don't care a continental."

"Don't you like me?"

"Oh, yes. I'll give you a diamond-breast-pin for your New Year's."

"Oh, pshaw! Don't chaff," said Vangs, irritably. "Give me a drink, and call it square. Pour out a stiff horn of best toilet vinegar—a regular growler."

"I'm not pouring out horns for anybody to-night," replied Johnson.

"You won't!"

"No, sir."

"If you ain't the most contrary man as ever lived, I want to know," said Vangs.

"It you don't like it, you can do the other thing. We're all bosses here."

"Didn't I save you from the cave? You're—hic—ungrateful, Johnson."

"That's me. For we are jolly good fellows, for we are jolly good fellows. Chorus, old boss. Sail in, you cripple. For we are jolly good fellows, and so say all of us with a hip, hip, hip, hurrah! Tigah! Go it!"

Vangs, however refused to sing.

Hattie trembled with terror when she saw the state the men were getting into.

Softly she murmured a prayer to Heaven for help. The help she prayed for was nearer than she expected.

Doctor Ames, Rob and Kedge were all listening overhead, and merely waiting for the proper time to arrive for them to interfere.

"Why didn't you sing, hang you?" cried Johnson. "Don't sulk with me, you old kill-joy."

"Oh, you're high-toned, yes are," replied Vangs. "I don't like to be called a cripple. If I am lame, I can't help it."

"Not knowing, can't say," exclaimed Johnson again, in his provoking manner.

"If I had you on board ship, my hearty, I'd score your back."

"But you haven't got me. For we are jolly good fellows. Chorus, Vangs. You won't, eh? All right. You're no good for melody, and I'll try you on something else. Listen! Let the bottle pass; we'll drink another glass, to the maids of merry, merry England."

"England be ——!" growled Vangs.

"That's what I've said lots of times, but I wish I was back there, though these are good quarters, and I'm making out first rate. So here we go galloping on together, my boys, my old gray mare and I."

"Oh, stop it. We've had enough of that."

"It seems to me but yesterday since we were boys together—since we were boys, happy little boys—since we were bo-ho-boys to-gether. Can't you?"

"Dry up, I tell you!" cried Vangs, "or, so help me Bob, I'll thump you. This whisky's too strong for you. I reckon it's the sort of stuff that makes a fellow talk about his mother."

"I loved her once," continued Johnson, who was very far gone in intoxication. "She might have been the happiest in the land, only—and mark the fact, Vangs, carefully—she made a fool of herself and was a way with a first-class fiddler, who subsequently ill-treated her, and got a stretch for selling potatoes highly adulterated with that beautiful specimen of insect life, the bug of Colorado."

"No, she didn't, either," said Vangs.

"Who didn't?"

"The gal. The song don't say so. You don't sing right. The songs say she fell in love with a man who played the flageolet in the middle of a German band."

"Then the song's wrong, and I'll have nothing more to do with it," replied Johnson. "I'll stay no more on this lone shore, so let the music play away. Strike up music. Play more. I'll start by the morning train to cross the raging main, for I'm on the way to my own true love ten thousand miles away. Hello!"

The last exclamation was caused by the upsetting of the stool on which he was sitting, which caused him to fall to the ground.

"Down he goes kerchunk. Just what I expected," said Vangs. "Pride will always have a fall, likewise footlashes."

With the utmost difficulty Johnson raised himself up, and sat once more on the stool, still singing:

"By perseverance I ele-va-ted, and went to the front like a solid man. Vangs, if you don't sing, I shall open on you, and if I do, you'll feel sick—don't you forget that."

"Oh, pshaw! You're the worst I ever saw," replied Vangs.

"Who says so?"

"I do."

"Lend me one of your crutches till I beat you. I swear, Vangs, you want a wetting the worst way; for the boys all cry, as you go by, are you ever going to shoot that hat?"

And he shouted "hat, hat, hat!" as loudly as he could, and then laughed to himself, in a highly satisfied, but semi-bestial manner.

After this he tried to do a march-round, singing, feebly:

"From Jackson Street 'way down to Avenue A, the drums and flies so sweetly, sweetly play, as we march, march, march, the men of the Mulligan Guards."

Arriving at Vangs's chair, he patted him on the head and exclaimed:

"Hello, Mulligan! How you was to-morrow, Mulligan?"

"If you don't give me a rest I'll hit you, you crazy fool."

Jack Johnson continued to pat Vangs on the head, saying:

"With his ears cut short and his tail cut long, oh, where has my little dog gone? He answers to the name of Vangs, and a bad-tempered dog he is, too. Here, Vangs! Hi, here! come and have a bone."

"If my word!" exclaimed Vangs. "You've copped the distiller, and no mistake. If you weren't so drunk I'd ——"

"Put a roof on me, Vangy—a Mansarder, something stylish—something up to Dick, as we say in the British navy. Oh, you fellows know nothing over here. You're too young—the infant navies I call you."

"We were big enough to whip you Britishers in '75, and again in 1812."

"Oh, that was a fluke. You couldn't do it again, Vangy."

"Couldn't we! I'll bet my bottom dollar we could, and don't you forget it."

"Want Canada, don't you, Vangy?" said Johnson, who was, as we know, dreadfully provoking when drunk. "Why don't you take it? Because you know you mustn't, old son. You're afraid to send the distiller, and no mistake. That's what's the matter. The Star-Spangled Banner has to drop before the Union Jack—the flag that's braved a thousand years the battle and the breeze."

"Can't you blow?"

"Got something to blow on, old sea," continued Johnson, who, I'm no bag of wind. You can't call me a Yank."

"You're nothin' half so good," replied Vangs. "And see here, I'll drop you if you get my New England blood up."

Johnson hopped about the room defiantly.

"Well, old pork and beans!" he cried. "Sail in. Skip lively, or I'll run away with your gal. She was no fair, I do declare, no mortal could resist her. That's so, eh, isn't it?"

"Oh, don't talk to me, for heaven's sake," replied Hattie.

"You needn't put on airs, Mrs. Vangs."

"Don't, please, don't call me that horrid name. I am not, and never will be, Mrs. Vangs."

"Well, it's a free country, and you can please yourself. There's one advantage about Vangs, though, when you look at him in the light of a fond husband, and that is, if you wish to correct him, you can lick him all you like, and he is too inane to run fast after you. Land him on the nose with your right, and take his wind with your left. Cut, and create a diversion in the rear with a broom, after which you can playfully pelt him with knobs of coal, or fire rockets at him through the window."

"If you ain't a rascal, I want to know," exclaimed Vangs, smiling.

Once more Johnson subsided on his stool, and his head fell on his hands, the latter being placed on the table.

Soon a heavy snore indicated that he slept.

"Pro-fessor! pro-fessor!" shouted Vangs.

Mr. Yode Stoole heard the cry, and woke out of a doze into which he had fallen.

"All right, my festive and highly-esteemed fungus," he answered.

Presently he came marching up the passage, and setting his rifle down, reached out for the whisky, of which he took a deep draught.

"That's good," he exclaimed. "Goes down better than mushrooms stewed or fried. Ain't you fellows having a high old time—eh! Why didn't you call me before?"

"Because we did not want you," replied Vangs.

"That's good enough, my miserable mushroom," said the professor.

"Give us a rest on mushrooms, won't you?"

"No; it's the article I deal in, and I'll keep it on until further orders. Do I not represent in foreign parts the Philadelphia Society for the Further Propagation and Development of Edible Fungi?"

"Bosh!"

"It isn't bosh; it's mushrooms; and I'd like to send you to Philadelphia, my festive fungus."

"Shut up. I want you."

"What for?"

"Business."

"I'm right here, boss," replied Yode Stoole.

"Make me high enough and I'll do any mortal thing you ask."

"You've got to marry me to this young lady."

"To-night?"

"Yes, right away."

"But I've no prayer-book, and it's so long since I ran with the inside of a church that I couldn't give you the faintest idea of what they say when they make a man miserable for life."

"What's that?"

"Why, marry him."

"Well," said Vangs, with a grim smile, "you have got to say something. Make us man and wife. You're a professor."

"Not of theology."

"I don't know what that means; but you're a professor of mushrooms, and that's good enough. Just splice us, won't you?"

"I'll splice the main-brace first."

"Go it blind. Sail in. There's nothing mean about me," replied Vangs. "I'm running this shanty. I'm the boss, but I'll let you have all you want. That's me."

The professor drank again and again, and at last announced himself ready to perform the marriage ceremony.

"Take her hand," he said.

"I can't. She's bound fast to the chair, and I am afraid to let the little cat loose till it's all fixed," replied Vangs.

Hattie gave him a look which would have made him feel awfully mean if he had had any feeling left in him.

But he hadn't.

He had revealed himself in his true character now, and nothing he had her wholly in his power, he did not care what she thought of him.

"Put your hand on her shoulder, that will do as well. I'll fix it, my festive fungus," said the professor.

Vangs did as he was told, and the girl shrank from him as if an adder had touched her.

Her tears fell freely, but she did not speak, knowing very well that no words of hers would avail to save her from her fate.

Even if Jack Johnson had manhood enough left in him to save her, he was too drunk to be of any assistance.

She gave way to despair.

[To be continued.]

"Rob Rollalong" was commenced in No. 625.

OUR LETTER-BOX.

D. S.—We have not the whole or part of the set. They have all been sold.

L. STONE.—We hope soon to give you a story from his pen, but at the present moment he is not in this country.

L. C——.—You will certainly be right in applying yourself to the study of drawing, and we think that you have great talent.

ALLEN DYER BALTO.—We will do our best to please you at some future period.

ARNOLD W. SEGUIN.—We do take those very points into consideration, and you stand as much chance of winning a prize as any one else. We should think that you have already had proof of that last.

J. W.—Twenty-five cents a line.

F. G. M.—We cannot tell you exactly, for the simple reason that some local printer might be able to do it for you cheaper than we could. It would not be worth while having one printed, for it would cost you nearly as much for one as it would for one hundred.

N. L. SEGUIN.—We acknowledge the receipt of Mr. Seguin's contributions, for which we are extremely grateful. We shall use some of them at the earliest opportunity.

A young lady or gentleman who forgot to sign his or her name, asks us if we pay anything for contributions to the Round Table. We must say that we do not, for the simple reason that we receive so many voluntary contributions, that we always have ten times more on hand than we are able to use.

J. W. THOMPSON.—Many thanks for your letter, and some of your ideas are very good, indeed. We may adopt some of them at a future period, and beg to state that the object of Our Letter-Box is to invite correspondence. We shall be only too happy to give our young readers any information within our power.

AN OLD READER.—Draw a square representing 100 feet square, and then divide the square by 100 lines each way; each space will represent a square foot, and you will find 10,000 of them. Then draw a parallelogram of 50 x 150, and divide it by lines in the same manner, and you will find that you have 7,500 of them. If the parallelogram were 200 x 1, there would be 200 squares, each representing a foot.

T. Y.—Go to bed early, rise early, eat and drink moderately, take plenty of exercise, and trust in God.

JOHN C. LYON.—You are mistaken. Look in the Drawing Table column in each number.

MISS IDEE BROWN.—Many thanks for your contributions. We are not so likely to give you the names of the authors if they do not appear above their stories, but at the same time we should be happy to forward a letter to any of them at your request.

F. H. C.—We will try to oblige you as soon as we have finished the Christmas games.

S. ALLEN GREENLEAF.—We will try to oblige you in a very short time. We do not know of any reliable work upon that game.

INQUISITIVE.—E. P. Weston has not entered up to date, and we do not think it likely that he will. We shall publish a story of the sea in a few weeks. You will have a very fine handwriting, and you spell very well, indeed.

THE DRAWING-TABLE.

FIFTH COMPETITION.

PRIZE-WINNERS.

1.—Irvine J. Chester, Westerly, R. I.

2.—Washie Vanderlip, Elkhart, Ind.

3.—Angus W. Combs, San José, Santa Clara County, Cal.

HONORABLE MENTION.

J. B. Orr, Bridgeport, Conn.
A. Lipphard, 625 L Street, N. W. Washington, D. C.
Fred. Miller, Box 193, Vincennes, Ind.
F. Donovan, 431 Twenty-second Street, San Francisco, Cal.
George L. Swain, Lynn, Mass.
Ernie Hewitt, Elkhart, Ind.
William H. Meeker, 26 Webster Place, Brooklyn, N. Y.
Walter Heck, Tecumseh, Mich.
George A. Ingalls, 12 Pearl Street, Lynn, Mass.
Layton G. Tucker, Farrville, Nahna Co., Mo.
C. Tighe, 12 Spring Street, Charleston, S. C.
Stephen Leo, corner Cadzier and Chestnut Streets, New Orleans, La.
Thomas Doran, 9 Queen Street, Charleston, S. C.
John McIntosh, 93 State Street, Toledo, Ohio.
Miss Lizzie Folsom, 205 Twelfth Street, Louisville, Ky.
R. Backmann, 43 South Charles Street, Baltimore, Md.
Fred. Van Odd, 180 Walnut Street, Newark, N. J.
Frank M. Donovan, 431 Twenty-second Street, San Francisco, Cal.
Alfred S. Douglas, 15 Bem Street, Camden, N. J.
Lelia A. Douglas, 15 Bem Street, Camden, N. J.
John Barzkiewicz, 22 Second Street, Brooklyn, N. Y.
Irvine J. Chester, Westerly, R. I.
Thomas Brown, 18 Newark Street, Newark, N. J.
S. M. Rand, Cambridge, Mass.
Michael Hymes, 31 and 33 Ferry Street, Newark, N. J.
Washie Vanderlip, Elkhart, Ind.
Ernest Schwarze, 174 Chrystie Street, New York City.
Anthony Nehrbas, 27 Jefferson Street, New York City.
William Conoway, 1137 Twenty-first Street, between L and M Streets, Washington, D. C.
Julia A. Coburn, Howard City, Mich.
Miss Minnie Logan, St. Helena, Napa Co., Cal.
Edwin Smith, 403 Peoan Street, Peoria, Ill.
Master Westicton, Springt Valley, N. Y.
N. M. E. Boebart (no address).

The following candidates have been heard from, and their drawings will be decided upon next week:

J. E. Britton, John L. Kopf, A. W. Storm, Master Willie A. Williams, Michael Rosenthal, Arthur Brightman, J. A. Mulvey, Harry Reeve, William Milliman, Jr., Bert Root, J. B. Keating, Will M. Oliver, Master Frank Holliday, G. B. Schimer, John I. Coleman, B. Harrison, Bert Kintz, Master Sidney S. Banton, A. Foreman, G. N. Murphy, Geo. Ingalls, Chas. Shaw, Charley Drake, Alex. W. Wallace, Master S. W. Bramwell, Chas. A. Devlan, Albert Wanner, Daniel R. Hogan, F. S. Mines, Frank M. Shiver, Augustus Peverelly, Albert Fuentes, E. Loure, Master L. J. Carter, E. B. Gumble, Howard Crouse, Wilber R. Hyde, Jules Birchel, Cherley Bertham, W. D. England, Master Harry E. D. Helvin, Sumner Kittle, Leon Cognard, Maggie M. Rose, Miss Boys, Alex. Taylor, Master William T. Keough, John Conoway, Louis Van Bremen, F. T. L. Boyle.

The following competitors are entitled to a certificate of merit, but have failed to put their address with the contributions: L. L. Wales, F. Williamson and Thomas McGuinness.

THE ROUND TABLE.

PRIZES.

To be Read by all who Send Answers.

FOR A COMPLETE SET OF ANSWERS TO ALL THE ENIGMAS, ETC., IN THIS NUMBER.

For the best and earliest, due allowance being made for the distance of each competitor - $5.00
For the next best - - - - - - - 2.50
For the third in merit and promptness - - 1.00

N. S.—There is no prize offered for an answer to only one puzzle or riddle. The answers must be to ALL. Competitors in all parts of the country have an equal chance.

ANSWERS TO RIDDLES, ETC., IN No. 688.

1. Cat-act. 2. Nap, Awe, Pew. 3. Butter-fly.
4.—P U T E R 5.—O V E N
F I N V A N E
G E N D S
B E L B E S T
H A R R Y.
6. Elasticity. 7. Slaughter. 8. Our Balloon. 9. Poplar, Popular. 10. Plant-age net.

WINNERS OF PRIZES IN No. 688.

1.—N. George, P. O. Box 565, Baltimore, Md.

2.—Miss H. D. Hinds, 209 Schermerhorn Street, Brooklyn, N. Y.

3.—Miss Nellie Hall, Brandon, Rutland Co., Vt.

ENIGMAS, CHARADES, ETC.

1.—DIAMOND PUZZLES.

I.—1. A consonant. 2. Bird. 3. A very useful article. 4. A number. 5. A consonant. The centre letters read downward are the same as my third.

II.—1 and 2. A precious metal. 3. A couple. 4. Behavior. 5. Same as centre. 6. A prisoner. 7. A spice. 8. A number. 9. A vowel.

2.—SQUARE WORDS.

I.—1. A girl's name. 2. To lessen. 3. To wash. 4. Relating to morals. 5. A sucker of blood.

II.—1. A small room. 2. A crown. 3. Tributes. 4. A queen. 5. Coverings.

3.—ENIGMA.

My form from sooty ancestors is sprung, (a)
Though worthless they, except to give me birth;
To tell my uses words would fail my tongue,
For sure I'm found on every place on earth.
And yet, in ages past, men knew me not
Who now, ungrateful, bend me under foot. (b)
Of invalids I soothe the weary lot; (c)
Amongst your clothes, I probably am put; (d)
Assistance oft I lend the whaling trade; (e)
While Eastern nations keep their wine in me; (f)
If shipwrecked, I can lend important aid; (g)
Or dress your limbs, if wounded you should be; (h)
Perhaps you find I serve to give you light; (i)
No architect can do without my aid; (j)
Your furniture with me would look more bright; (k)
And in a house you find me always laid; (l)
Sometimes I help to show the traveler's way; (m)
As I surmount each of my services I lend; (n)
On vessels, too, you see me every day; (o)
And now it's time my history to end.

4.—CONUNDRUMS.

1. In what magazine are you likely to find brains?
2. Why is a quiet hen like a gun?
3. What style of speaker represents a nauseated traveler?
4. A fighter naming his calling expressed his joy in disliking his wife. What did he say?

5.—ARITHMOREM. (Heathen Deities.)

1. 200 a bush. 6. 12 no.
2. 1500 a use. 7. 87 ens.
3. 55 arena. 8. 101 abus.
4. 101 up. 9. 2050 opeen.
5. 155 uns.

6.—GEOGRAPHICAL DOUBLE ACROSTIC.

The initials form the name of an author, and the finals two of his works.

1. A town of Somersetshire.
2. A town of America.
3. A town in the north of England.
4. A village in Belgium.
5. A village near Newcastle.
6. A town in Surrey.
7. A town in Ireland.
8. A town in Ceylon.
9. A province in America.
10. A town in the South of England.
11. A seaport in Russia.
12. A town of England.

7.—ALPHABETICAL PUZZLES.

The sound of the words to be given in the defined number of letters.

1. A man's name, which contains four, and can be spelt with two letters.
2. An adjective of three, which can be spelt with two letters.
3. A treatise containing five, which can be spelt with two letters.
4. Two English rivers containing three letters respectively, which can be spelt with one each.
5. A verb containing six, which can be spelt with three letters.
6. A word meaning to capture, and containing five, which can be spelt with two letters.

8.—TOWNS ENIGMATICALLY EXPRESSED.

1. My first is sacred, my second is an adverb, my whole is a town in England.
2. My first is a season, my second is a meadow, and my whole is a town in the United States.
3. My first is a color, my second is a bolt, and my whole is a town in Scotland.
4. My first is a color, my second is a statue, and my whole is a town in Scotland.
5. My first is ability, my second is a small river, and my whole is a town in Scotland.
6. My first is a vehicle, my second is a stack, and my whole is a town in Ireland.

9.—BATTLES ENIGMATICALLY EXPRESSED.

1. A useful fluid, two-fifths of to rub out, and a human being.
2. A boy's name and a vowel.
3. A person, a mineral, and a diphthong.
4. A rim and an accent.
5. A tax or levy beaten and a weight.
6. To rouse from sleep, a piece of ground not inhabited, and a color.
7. A brown color and a battle.
8. An amphibious animal and to consume.

FUN FOR THE BOYS.

WHAT can pass before the sun without making a shadow? The wind.

WHEN is an army like a tuck in a lady's skirt? When it is hemmed in.

WHAT is the most unfortunate vegetable they could have on board a ship? A leek.

A PROMISING YOUNG ARTISTIC.—*Old Boy*—"Ullo; what's your name?" *New Boy*.—"Dante Michael Angelo Salvator Rosea Napkins?" *Old Boy*—"Is that all? What's your father?" *New Boy*—"Poet, painter, sculptor, architect and musician." *Old Boy*—"Crimini! Is he great?" *New Boy*—"The greatest that ever lived." *Old Boy*—"I never! And what are you going to be?" *New Boy*—"The same as my father, only greater." *Old Boy*—"Oh, my!"—[Kicks young Napkins, and exit.

THE SILENT MAN OF PAWTUCKET.—They had a dime supper in the neighborhood of Pawtucket, conceived and carried out by the ladies. The conditions of this novel supper were these: For every word spoken by the gentlemen at the supper-table a forfeit of ten cents was imposed; but, on the other hand (as dukes always compensated with rights and restrictions with privilege), it was agreed that whoever could weather the whole supper, submitting to all queries, surprises and ingenious questions, should be entitled to it gratuitously. Many and frequent were the artifices and subterfuges resorted to by the ladies in attendance to entrap the unguarded, and one after another stout and discreet men went down before the constant and artful interrogations. At last all fell out and paid the dime penalty save one individual—a queer chap, whom no one seemed to know. He attended strictly to business and passed unheeded the jokes, jibes, and challenges. They quizzed him; but all in vain. He wrestled with the turkey and grappled with the goose. He balled out the cranberry-sauce with an unswerving hand, and he ate the celery as the scriptural vegetarian ate grass; and finally, when he had finished his fifth piece of pie, he whipped out a pocket-slate, wiped it off with his napkin, and wrote on it, in a large and legible hand, "I am deaf and dumb."

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GIVEN AWAY!

Upon receipt of only 50 Cents (in P. O. or fr. money order), we will send a Set of Recipes for Home or Out-Door, and in every number we will give, free, one set of the most valuable and valuable receipts; namely: Receipts for Rendering Leather Pocket Book, made of fine calf, and will hold a large amount of money. Mounted objects for the Microscope. Receipt for Glazing Boots to look like Patent Leather. Receipt for Making Rose Pomade. Receipt for Making Hair Restorative. Receipt for Making Bone Handle Pocket-Knife. Receipt for Making Nickel Silver Bracelets, engraved to look like Nickel Silver Bracelets, engraved to look like Gold. Receipt for Making Gold Bracelets, engraved to look like Gold. Receipt for Making Gold Bracelets, engraved to look like Gold. Receipt for Making Gold

A STRUGGLE FOR LIFE BETWEEN A YOUNG LADY AND A GIGANTIC DEER IN A LAKE IN PENNSYLVANIA.

A STRUGGLE FOR LIFE.

FOUR or five miles back of Shohola, Pa., lives an old resident named Thomas Hendershot, who has a pretty daughter about eighteen years of age. Clara Hendershot can row a boat, shoot a gun, or trap a bear as well as any man in the county. Recently she started across the lake known as the Great Walker Pond to visit a friend. She used a light boat belonging to her father, and carried, as was her custom, a small rifle slung across her shoulder by a leather strap. When nearly in the centre of the lake she discovered an object in the water a short distance off, and on approaching nearer found that it was a large five-pronged buck, which had been driven in by dogs. She immediately unslung her gun, and, after taking aim, fired. The ball passed through the deer's neck, making a painful wound. The animal, enraged, struck at the boat with his fore-foot, completely shattering one side of the fragile bark, which sank, leaving Miss Hendershot in the water with the infuriated buck. She was plucky and could swim well, and as the deer came toward her she caught it by the horns and plunged her hunting-knife into its neck, killing it instantly.

She then called for help, and as none arrived she swam to the shore, about a quarter of a mile, and hurried home. She put on dry clothes, and procuring another boat, rowed out to where the dead buck was floating and towed it to shore. When dressed the animal weighed nearly 280 pounds. This is the seventh deer Miss Hendershot has killed.

RIVALS THAT HAD TO DIE.

A YOUNG lady on Mount Pleasant Avenue, Newark, N. J., who is passionately fond of animal pets, brought with her from Europe, about a year ago, a valuable "Dandie Dinmont" terrier of the female sex, that rejoices in the classic and euphonious name of "Io." The little canine was fondled and caressed by her kind young mistress, and soon came to know her place as the favorite of the household. She was given a high seat near the table and served with the choicest bits at each family meal, and slept upon the softest of beds. In every respect she had the luxurious living of a princess, and even her collar was heavily plaited with gold. She was kept aloof from all vulgar lovers, and bided her time, sighing, perhaps, wistfully, for a thoroughbred mate of her own kind.

Thus things went on peacefully with pretty little Io until last Summer, when the young lady was presented with a beautiful and purely-bred Maltese cat. After a few days of growling and furtive looks of jealousy Io made friends with "Niobe," and intimacy seemed to ripen into the warmest affection. The two pets shared the same bed, and were fed equal portions of dainties from the same gentle hand. It was when midsummer deepened the foliage in the back-yard on Mount Pleasant Avenue that one lovely, quiet night, Niobe stole softly from the side of trusting little Io to while away the moonlit hours in gentle dalliance with a lover of her own degree.

Like the well-bred cats that they were, they made no hideous caterwauling, and boot-jacks, shoe-brushes, and sundry articles of the toilet were never hurled from their places by disturbed slumberers.

As the grapes ripened upon the vines and the nights grew cooler Niobe gave up her wanderings, dismissed her lover, and cuddled down by little Io.

But a few nights ago Io missed Niobe from her accustomed place. The mistress of the pair of pets noticed that when the cat made her appearance the next day she had lost her plumpness of form, and it was soon discovered that she had hidden away in an unused hat-box four of the prettiest kittens that ever closed their eyes upon the cruel world. Io was not long in discovering that something was up beside the back of the usually placid Niobe. She nosed around, and found out the secret. When she poked a paw in among the kittens Niobe gashed her nose with her paw, and sent the dog howling down the stairs.

The next day one of the kittens had disappeared —no one knew how, when or where. The day after another kitten was missing, and on the following day still another. The next morning, however, the young lady determined to keep watch. About eleven o'clock she saw Io with the only remaining kitten, carrying it by the neck to a clump of thick bushes in the rear of the yard. Io was made to drop her little burden, that was found to be still alive. Under the bushes, carefully covered with fallen leaves, lay the three missing feline cherubs, whose career had been suddenly cut short through the jealousy of naughty Io. The fourth kitten has been placed beyond the reach of the terrier.

"OH, grandpa, I fooled the geese awful, just now," said a bright little fellow. "Well, my dear, what did you do?" asked the mild old gentleman. "Oh, I give 'em your snuff, and they are sneezing like fury!" INEZ BROWN.

CHRISTMAS GAMES.

(Continued.)

THE game of forfeits is very innocent and very amusing, but sometimes it is played in a manner which causes annoyance to some of those who take part in it.

There is no possible reason why this should be the case, and the practice of the following forfeits will prevent our young friends from falling into any such difficulty.

The player who has to pay forfeit is sentenced to be the

KNIGHT OF THE RUEFUL COUNTENANCE.

He must take a lighted candle in his hand, and select some other player to be his squire, who takes hold of his arm, and then they both go round to all the ladies of the company.

It is the squire's office to kiss the hand of each lady, and after each kiss to wipe the knight's mouth with a handkerchief.

The knight must carry the candle through the penance and preserve a grave countenance.

HOBSON'S CHOICE.

Burn a cork one end and keep it clean the other.

You are then to be blindfolded, and the cork to be held horizontally to you.

You are then to be asked three times which end you will have; if you say "Right," then that end of the cork must be passed along your forehead; the cork must then be turned several times, and whichever end you say must be passed down your nose; and the third time across your cheeks or chin.

You are then to be allowed to see the success of your choice.

This will afford capital fun, and should be played fairly, to give the person who owns the forfeit a chance of escape.

The end of the cork should be thoroughly well burnt.

As a joke for Christmas time this is perfectly allowable, and the damp corner of a towel or handkerchief will set all right.

It should be allotted to a gentleman, and one who has a good broad and bare face.

JOURNEY TO ROME.

The person whose forfeit is called must go round to all in the company, to tell them he is going on a journey to Rome, and that he will feel great pleasure in taking anything for his Holiness the Pope.

Every one must give something to the traveler.

The more cumbersome or awkward to carry, the more fun it occasions.

When he has gathered all, he is to carry the things to one corner of the room and deposit them, and thus end his penance.

THE MEDLEY.

Sing one line of four different songs without pausing between them.

It would be well to find four lines that afford humor, taken consecutively, such as:

"All round my hat."

"A rare old plant is the ivy green."

"Sweet Kitty Clover, she bothers me so."

"In the Bay of Biscay, oh!"

POETIC MUSINGS.

Repeat a passage of poetry, counting the words aloud as you proceed, thus:

"Full (one) many (two) a (three) flower (four) is (five) born (six) to (seven) blush (eight) unseen (nine) and (ten) waste (eleven) its (twelve) sweetness (thirteen) on (fourteen) the (fifteen) desert (sixteen) air (seventeen)!"

This will prove a great puzzle to many and afford considerable amusement.

HUSH-A-BY BABY.

YAWN until you make several others in the room yawn; this can be done well by one person who can imitate yawning well, and it will afford indescribable mirth.

It should be allotted to one of the male sex with a large mouth and a sombre or heavy appearance, if such a man can be found in the party.

THE PILGRIM.

A gentleman conducts a lady round the circle, saying to each member (if a gentleman), "A kiss for my sister and a morsel of bread for me"; if a lady, "A morsel of bread for my sister, and a kiss for me."

The bread is of no particular importance, but the kiss is indispensable.

AN ENVIOUS DOG MURDERS AND BURIES SOME RIVAL PETS.

"WHICH do you love best—my dogs or cats?" asked a noted sharper of a lady friend. "I did like dogs the best until I saw you, but now I prefer cats." "Why, my dear?" "Because dogs put me in mind of you," was the innocent reply. He has not asked a lady which she likes best since. INEZ BROWN.

A WITTY young lady on being asked what her favorite motto was, replied, "What is love without a lover?" INEZ BROWN.